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NMC students play pivotal roles in rebuilding community. PAGE 7

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

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AP

A person sits on a rock face overlooking the ocean in Niue in this 2018 photo. The tiny Pacific island nation of Niue has come up with a novel plan to protect its vast and pristine territorial waters—it will get sponsors to pay. Under the plan, which was being launched by Niue's Prime Minister Dalton Tagelagi on Tuesday Sept. 19, 2023 in New York, individuals or companies can pay $148 to protect 1 square kilometer (about 250 acres) of ocean from threats such as illegal fishing and plastic waste for a period of 20 years.

Sponsor an ocean? Niue has novel plan to protect its slice of the Pacific

By NICK PERRY
Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—The tiny Pacific island nation of Niue has come up with a novel plan to protect its vast and pristine territorial waters—it will get sponsors to pay.

Under the plan, which was being launched by Niue's Premier Dalton Tagelagi on Tuesday in New York, individuals or companies can pay $148

See SPONSOR on Page 4

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
9

DOL doesn't have accurate picture of touchback impact

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor does not have an accurate picture of the impact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' "touchback" policy has had on the CNMI because only a number of local businesses have participated in the department's recent survey.

Back in June, to gain a clear perspective on what the actual impact of the USCIS' "touchback" provision would be for the CNMI as a whole, the CNMI Department of Labor launched a CW-1 survey.

The survey was essentially meant to measure the impact of the implementation of the "touchback" provision by having local businesses

See DOL on Page 4

4 of 14 PROC nationals arrested enroute to Guam to plead guilty

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Four of the 14 People's Republic of China nationals who were arrested last week for attempting to illegally enter Guam via boat are set for a change of plea hearing this week.

Last week, the United States Homeland Security Investigations arrested 14 Chinese nationals who were allegedly trying to enter Guam via boat illegally which was later discovered to have been under the control of HSI to begin with.

All 14 individuals are facing charges of engaging in a conspiracy to transport, move, or attempt to transport or move an alien within the United States in reckless disregard of the fact that the alien entered and remained in the United States in violation of law.

Despite having pleaded not guilty during their initial

See PROC on Page 4

The Marianas goes global with *National Geographic*

The Marianas Visitors Authority is taking The Marianas global with one of the most iconic brands in the world, National Geographic.

Full-page ads featuring Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are being placed in the October, November, and December 2023 print and digital issues of the award-winning *National Geographic Traveller* (UK). The magazine "seeks to extol great storytelling, authentic travel experiences and 'you-are-there' photography, with insightful information to help would-be explorers travel widely and safely. It aims to inspire those who are passionate about experiencing the world, championing

See GLOBAL on Page 4

MVA

The Marianas will be featured in three full-page ads of the print and digital copies of *National Geographic Traveller* (UK) magazine in October-December 2023. The ads, separately featuring Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, target both Europe and the global FIT traveler.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
In collaboration with 500 Sails, Hyatt Regency Saipan brings back the culturally authentic canoe rides at the resort's ocean front.
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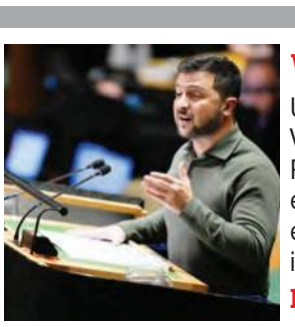

WORLD
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia is "weaponizing" everything from food and energy to abducted children in its war against Ukraine.
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Actor and philanthropist Michael J. Fox won this year's Elevate Prize Catalyst Award.
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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

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Local

Bicameral conference committee still at a stalemate

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The bicameral conference committee has yet to reach a mutually agreed budget bill for the CNMI government's operations for fiscal year 2024 and will continue their deliberations tomorrow, Friday.

Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the Senate conference committee and presides over the meeting, said at the latter part of the meeting yesterday afternoon that five is the definite number that they will be suspending from the holidays.

"Whether or not Senate agrees, then the additional holidays can come into discussion. But, for now, to kind of speed things through since we're not going to meet tomorrow, the fiscal analyst can determine the fiscal impact of those five holidays," Manglona said.

He said five is the definite number that they are going to suspend and anymore is dependent upon the agreement with the Senate in regards to their support for any of these tax revenue bills.

"And so, if I can ask the fiscal analyst prepare the financial impact of what five holidays, how many hours that would affect our employees we were just spread out the 40-hour cut across all agencies throughout the whole fiscal year," Manglona said.

He said with the fiscal analyst preparing his analysis as well as the Senate meeting tomorrow in session and discussing with the full body the understanding of these revenue generating bills, they will be in recess until 10am, Friday.

Rep. Flores' request to join Judicial Council is rejected

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro has denied Rep. Marissa Renee Flores' (Ind-Saipan) request that the Judicial Council membership be expanded to include the chairs of the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee and the Senate Judiciary, Government and Law Committee.

Flores

Castro, who chairs the Judicial Council, in a letter on Monday to Flores said the council respectfully denies her request in order to maintain the integrity and independence of each branch of government.

The other members of the Judicial Council are associate justices John A. Manglona and Perry B. Inos, Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja, and Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho.

Flores chairs the House JGO Committee, while Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) chairs the Senate JGL Committee.

Flores sent a letter to Castro last Sept. 11, stating that such legislative participation in the decisions of the judiciary as applied to the establishment of formal rules and informal policies and procedures can improve legislative oversight.

She said the Supreme Court Rule 52 establishing the Judicial Council reflects that the council shall include promulgating rules governing council business, and setting judicial branch administrative policies and procedures and overseeing court managers responsible for effectuating such policies and procedures.

Flores said the council shall also include recommending court rules to the Supreme Court for submission to the legislature, reviewing proposed legislation and suggesting new legislation affecting the judicial branch, and performing such other functions as provided by law.

The JGO Committee chair said several of these functions involve legislative matters, including proposed rules subject

See FLORES on Page 4

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SHEFA application deadline on Sept. 30

The Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance announced that the deadline to apply and submit supporting documents is on Sept. 30, 2023.

New applicants must create an account before proceeding with the application online at www.saipanshefa.com

They should also make sure to have all supporting documents ready to be uploaded.

For more information, call 670-233-5995 or email us at saipanshefa@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

JKPL calls on all trick-or-treaters

It's that time of the year and the Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, the Northern Marianas Library Association and all community partners invite everyone to join them for the 10th Annual Community Halloween Trunk-Or-Treat event.

Held every year, this popular free public event helps to promote and strengthen community partnership and engagement, fosters family bonding, and provides families with an alternative activity to trick-or-treating door-to-door. This spooktacular event is scheduled for Oct. 31, 2023 from 3:30pm to 6:30pm at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library parking lot in Susupe.

Since 2012, thousands of children and adults have enjoyed hours of fun dressing up in spooktacular costumes and trick-or-treating at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library parking lot. This year, the JKPL will have monetary prizes for the Best Family Halloween Costume Contest. Registration is required to participate in the costume contest.

JKPL will also have the return of People's Choice Award for Best Community Trunk. In the People's Choice Awards last year, Saipan Cubs Alpha Leo Club won first place, Priority Care Services won second place, and Coca-Cola Beverage Micronesia won third place. Which spooky trunk will be voted this year's People's Choice? Interested community partners and/or sponsors are invited to register a trunk or sponsor this year's event by emailing foremancelina@gmail.com, calling the library at 670-235-7315 for 2023 TOT Coordinator Celina or by picking up a registration and/or sponsorship form at your friendly Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. ***(PR)***

CNMI getting $5.4M grants for Rota recycling, community resilience, other programs

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI is receiving $612,441 to expand recycling infrastructure and waste management systems on Rota, while the Pacific Coastal Research & Planning of Saipan is getting $4 million to build community resilience to climate stressors and food insecurity, and the Commonwealth's Criminal Justice Planning Agency is receiving two grants worth $781,959.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) in his e-kilili newsletter over 'the weekend' disclosed that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced last week that the $612,441 funding for Rota recycling is from the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and nationwide represents the largest investment in recycling in 30 years.

Sablan said the Commonwealth funding will be used to purchase and install two balers on Rota to process municipal solid waste and to build a small building to house the balers, related electrical controls, and recycled commodities.

He said the CNMI will also purchase a paper shredder and a degausser, which is a machine that removes data from devices like hard drives, to manage sensitive paper documents and electronic media.

The delegate said in addition to implementing the National Recycling Strategy and helping build a waste-free circular economy, the grant also advances the administration's Justice40 commitment to smaller, underserved communities.

Created by the Biden-Harris administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Justice40 Initiative confronts and addresses decades of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities.

For the Pacific Coastal Research & Planning of Saipan, Sablan said the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service announced last week of the $4,026,332 grant that will support agroforestry, invasive species control, and professional development to mitigate environmental hazards and promote food production.

He said the PCRP project was selected as part of USDA's Urban and Community Forestry grant program, which is aimed at increasing equitable access to trees and nature and the benefits the provide to communities, including improving air quality, food security, and public health and safety.

See GRANTS on Page 4

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2015 TOYOTA YARIS L STK: 22H252A
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2020 MITSUBISHI MIRAGE G4 STK: 23M017A
SALE PRICE $14,995 | $109 PER PAYCHECK

2004 NISSAN TITAN SE STK: 23D024C
SALE PRICE $14,995 | $189 PER PAYCHECK

2017 MAZDA6 STK: 17P341
SALE PRICE $12,995 | $94 PER PAYCHECK

2020 HYUNDAI VELOSTER STK: 20R263
SALE PRICE $14,995 | $119 PER PAYCHECK

2015 MAZDA MAZDA6 GRAND TOURING STK: 22H195A
SALE PRICE $14,995 | $119 PER PAYCHECK

2016 KIA SPORTAGE STK: 22M240A
SALE PRICE $13,995 | $101 PER PAYCHECK

2017 HYUNDAI TUCSON STK: 14P396A
SALE PRICE $14,995 | $109 PER PAYCHECK

2018 TOYOTA RAV4 STK: 18P416
SALE PRICE $18,995 | $151 PER PAYCHECK

2019 HYUNDAI ELANTRA SEL STK: 22RN004
SALE PRICE $14,995 | $109 PER PAYCHECK

2018 KIA FORTE5 LX FWD STK: 19HS1006A
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2013 TOYOTA FJ CRUISER STK: 13P359
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PETS OF THE WEEK

Litter of three puppies, kittens

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A litter of three black puppies—one male and two females—are available for adoption. They are about eight weeks old, are ready to be adopted into a loving home, and are ready to be named.

There are also lots of kitties available for adoption: One siamese adult male, one black young adult male, one tabby kitten, one orange kitten, and one other tabby in foster home.

Contact the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in

As Perdido if you're interested in these adorable pups and kitties. Shelter hours are from Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm. Contact (670)-234-3647 (DOGS).

For inquiries about veterinary services please reach out to Saipan Humane Society at info@saipanhumanesociety.org or Whatsapp +1 (670) 838-7387.

Saipan Tribune is partnering with Lauren Cabrera, founder of the Saipan Humane Society, in collaboration with the SMO Animal Shelter in As Perdido, to feature their adoptable dogs into loving homes. Whether you are looking for a guard dog, lap dog, hiking buddy, or playful puppy, they most likely have the dog for you!

SPONSOR

From page 1

to protect 1 square kilometer (about 250 acres) of ocean from threats such as illegal fishing and plastic waste for a period of 20 years.

Niue hopes to raise more than $18 million from the scheme by selling 127,000 square-kilometer units, representing the 40% of its waters that form a no-take marine protected area.

In an interview with The Associated Press before the launch, Tagelagi said his people have always had a close connection with the sea.

"Niue is just one island in the middle of the big blue ocean," Tagelagi said. "We are surrounded by the ocean, and we live off the ocean. That's our livelihood."

He said Niueans inherited and learned about the ocean from their forefathers and they want to be able to pass it on to the next generation in sustainable health.

Most fishing in Niue is to sustain local people, although there are some small-scale commercial operations and occasional offshore industrial-scale fishing, according to the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization.

"Because of all the illegal fishing and all the other activities at the moment, we thought that we should be taking the lead, to teach others that we've got to protect the ocean," Tagelagi said.

Unregulated fishing can deplete fish stocks, which then cannot replenish, while plastics can be ingested by or entangle marine wildlife. Human-caused climate change has also led to warmer and more acidic oceans, altering ecosystems for underwater species.

Niue is also especially vulnerable to rising sea levels threatening its land and freshwater, and the island is at risk of more intense tropical storms charged by warmer air and waters.

With a population of just 1,700 people, Niue acknowledges it needs outside help. It's one of the smallest countries in the world, dwarfed by an ocean territory 1,200 times larger than its land mass.

Under the plan, the sponsorship money—called Ocean Conservation Commitments—will be administered by a charitable trust.

Niue will buy 1,700 sponsorship units, representing one for each of its citizens. Other launch donors include philanthropist Lyna Lam and her husband Chris Larsen, who co-founded blockchain company Ripple, and U.S.-based nonprofit Conservation International, which helped set up some technical aspects of the scheme.

GLOBAL

From page 1

sustainable travel and celebrating journeys with a local and cultural perspective."

The publication has 25,000 subscribers for its printed version with a total readership view of approximately 120,000 per issue. Additionally, the digital version has 600,000 downloads of the *National Geographic Traveller* mobile app that allows consumers to have direct access to view each issue published.

"The MVA is engaging the worldwide travelling community and spreading The Marianas name globally, and *National Geographic Traveller* (UK) is a very reputable and cost-effective way to do so," said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Promoting our destination through this global platform will not only spread awareness of The Marianas destination in the European market, but also to avid and FIT travelers all throughout the world to consider The Marianas as their next destination to travel. The first issue is already being circulated, and we're seeing traffic being driven to our website and even phone calls to our office in just the first few days."

The ads are embedded with a QR code leading to the official MVA website in English, allowing the tourism office to track the number of visits to the website generated by the ads. The first ad features the azure waters of Saipan's award-winning Managaha, the most visited tourist site in The Marianas.

National Geographic Traveller (UK) was named Best Consumer Travel Magazine at the British Travel Awards 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2019. The advertising campaign is federally funded under the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery. ***(PR)***

DOL

From page 1

provide the number of CW-1 employees they had that would be required to leave the CNMI this year in compliance with said provision.

However, according to DOL Secretary Leila Staffler, as of yesterday no new businesses participated in the survey.

To be more specific, based on a document acquired by the *Saipan Tribune*, only 18 local businesses/agencies participated in the survey.

In addition, based on the number of surveys submitted, among these 18 businesses/agencies alone, about 80 contract workers are scheduled to leave the island this month and more in the months to follow.

The department has been urging CNMI businesses who employ foreign workers to fill out the survey to give DOL an idea of how it can fill in the gaps in the CNMI workforce now that the "touchback" provision is being enforced in the CNMI.

According to a previous article on the *Saipan Tribune*, touchback refers to the requirement for foreign workers to leave the CNMI before their work visas could be renewed for a third consecutive time. That departure requirement also means they will have to stay away until a new permit is approved, which could take months.

"The survey is intended for any business owner who employs CWs or other visa type workers, because we're interested in understanding how many visa type workers are out there. That's information we don't actually collect. So, this is our effort to communicate with businesses directly so that we can understand how this new touchback policy affects them. It will also help us see how we can improve or increase our services as a Department of Labor to help the gaps with U.S. workers, if at all possible," Staffler said in a previous interview.

Staffler said DOL wants to help fill these gaps with U.S. workers so DOL encourages as many businesses as possible to take part in the survey in the next four weeks so that DOL can respond to their labor needs.

Fortunately, Staffler said, the CNMI has good training programs and facilities on island that are able to train locals to perform specific trade skills that have needed to be outsourced through foreign workers who may now have to leave due to the new touchback provision.

As a matter of fact, DOL hosted a job fair last week to connect local workers with businesses in need of employees in light of the exodus of foreign workers.

Overall, Staffler said, the survey is important in balancing DOL's responsibility of enforcing laws regarding workforce preference for U.S. workers, while also collecting data that would paint a clearer picture of how much the CNMI still needs foreign workers, like those under the CW-1 visa program, to bridge the gap in its workforce.

"People with economic interest wanted to know this data and we do not actually know this data. This is beyond the scope of what DOL for the CNMI is enabled to do because all CW applications are approved outside of our system so that information is not actually directly shared with us," Staffler said.

"We don't have control over this law and only U.S. Congress can change any of those provisions, so we just want to be able to react in an appropriate way to maintain our workforce needs for our businesses and hopefully keep our economy afloat. We created this survey because there were so many people in the community asking DOL about this data because the economy relies on this type of changes," she added.

PROC

From page 1

appearances last week, four of the 14 individuals are now set to change their plea to guilty.

Specifically, the individuals set for a change of plea hearing are Xu Lu, Weng Bin, Lin Yu Xing, and Gao Xi Ping.

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has set a change of plea hearing for the four individuals on Friday, Sept. 22, at 10am.

As for the 10 others, the court has scheduled them for detention hearings next week.

The other 10 individuals involved in this case are Wang Rui, Miao Fu Quan, Zhang Xiang Ke, Li Qin Jiang, Xu Zi You, Chen Qin Jun, Chen Qin, Shang Guan Hui Pin, Xu Dong Lin, and Din Hong Mei.

According to court documents, on Sept. 13, HSI agents conducted an enforcement operation with local and federal enforcement partners at Smiling Cove Marina on Saipan.

Prior to the operation, an HSI agent posed as a "boat captain" and entered into an agreement with one of the individuals involved in this case to transport a group to Guam in exchange for payment.

At approximately 3:56am on Sept. 13, HSI personnel and partners observed Xu's vehicle, followed by two other vehicles entering the Smiling Cove Marina area. Later, officers observed 14 individuals exiting from three vehicles.

The complaint stated that law officers observed 14 individuals putting on lifejackets near the vehicles. After, the vehicles departed the marina.

All 14 individuals boarded the boat that was leased by and under direct HSI control.

On the boat, the undercover agent conducted a roll call of each individual listed on the charter float plan previously provided by Xu.

The "boat captain" then requested for each individual to present proof of payment for the trip.

Each individual presented a bundle of what appeared to be currency when the undercover agent called their names.

All passengers affirmed that they did not want to be detected by law enforcement officials during the trip.

All passengers also affirmed that they were willing and ready to go to Guam and refused the undercover boat captain's offer to get off the vessel if they did not want to make the trip.

After this, HSI personnel and law enforcement partners apprehended the 14 individuals.

GRANTS

From page 3

Sablan said the program is funded by the Inflation Reduction Act, passed by Democrats in the last U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Joseph Biden in 2022.

PCRP calls itself a "small non-profit based on a small island, working on big issues across a very big ocean."

On the $781,959 for CJPA, Sablan said the U.S. Department of Justice announced this week that the CJPA is receiving $621,052 for the Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors (STOP) Violence Against Women program, a part of the Violence Against Women Act.

He said STOP funds are used to encourage partnerships with legal services and victim service organizations.

The grant provides victims of endangerment to find support within their community and with the help of law enforcement.

Sablan said the remaining $160,907 is to fulfill the CNMI Residential Substance Program by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

He said the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program works toward developing a residential program for those incarcerated to have access to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment services during and after their incarceration.

FLORES

From page 2

to Legislative review and proposed legislation.

She said Rule 52 expressly provides that the membership of the Council may include "other individuals as may be determined by the Council."

Flores said the JGO and JGL committees frequently exercise oversight on rules and legislation relevant to the judiciary.

In addition, she said, the committees participate in discussions as to whether particular judicial administrative matters should be resolved by adoption of "policy and procedure" or promulgation of proposed rules.

"As members of our community and advocates for a fair and just system, we all agree that working collaboratively aimed at improving systems creates the most significant impacts in upholding and protecting the integrity of our constitution," Flores said.

Gas up another 10 cents

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Fuel prices in the CNMI continue to increase steadily with local oil companies raising its prices another 10 cents.

Gas prices are up again by 10 cents with local oil companies raising its prices last Monday evening.

With the recent increase in prices, a gallon of regular fuel went from $5.66 per gallon to $5.76. Mobil Oil Marianas also raised its Supreme fuel up to $6.21 while diesel went up from $6.08 per gallon to $6.18.

The recent increase in fuel prices follows a string of increases in the last few months.

The first increase was seen back on July 19, after more than two months of steady fuel prices, Mobil Oil Marianas broke the streak with a 15-cent increase.

With the increase, regular fuel went up from $5.11 per gallon to $5.26 per gallon.

Less than a week after, on July 25, Shell Marianas surprised the CNMI community when it took the lead in implementing a 10-cent increase that brought regular fuel prices up from $5.26 per gallon to $5.36.

Again, less than a week after, on Aug. 2, gas went up 15 cents. With the previous increase, fuel went up from $5.36 per gallon to $5.51.

Following the Aug. 2 increase, local oil companies raised their prices again in a little over two weeks by 5 cents with fuel increasing from $5.51 per gallon to $5.56.

After over a week, local oil companies raised its prices again by 10 cents with gas prices raising from $5.56 per gallon to $5.66.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Gas prices are up again by 10 cents with local oil companies raising its prices last Monday evening.

USDOE-CNMI PSS MEETUP PSS

Visiting Senior Risk consultant for the U.S. Department of Education Christine Jackson, seated second right, recently met with Public School System interim commissioner of Education Donna M. Flores and Board of Education chair Antonio L. Borja, BOE vice chair Herman Atalig, secretary/treasurer Gregory Pat Borja, member Andrew Orsini, teacher representative Dr. Dora Miura, and non-public school representative Dr. Ron Snyder.

All women invited to Women's Wellness Walkathon

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Women' Affairs Office, under the Office of the Governor, is inviting all women in the CNMI to join the Women's Wellness Walkathon this Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023, at the Smiling Cove Marina in Puerto Rico.

The walkathon will be in partnership with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and will also include blood pressure and sugar count checks. The walkathon is set to begin at 6am and will continue until 9am. Participants' starting point will be at Smiling Cove Marina where they will walk to the Gov. Eloy S. Inos Peace Park before circling back.

Women's Affairs Office special assistant Barbara Sablan shared the genesis of the Women's Wellness Walkathon.

"The CNMI Women's Affairs Office wanted to plan this event as a start in promoting the fact that health is very crucial, especially among women. As women in the CNMI, we are often labelled as 'mothers of the land,' and so when we realize that, we need to continue to keep healthy."

She went on to invite all women to partake in the Women's Wellness Walkathon.

"I wanted to invite women to come and join us on this walk to promote healthier living, both physically and mentally, since it's very important for not only ourselves but in the long run it does also benefit our families and peers."

All women are welcome to grab their running shoes and join the walk—everyone at their own pace.

Sablan said the Women's Wellness Walkathon will have a free registration on the event day itself at the Smiling Cove Marina.

"[We want] to just see the numbers participants and for the office to be able to contact those who are interested for upcoming events," she said.

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Nutrition Assistance Program , As Lito from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
SEPT 8 21
Child Health Check
For children 0-17 years old. Measurements and growth, anticipatory guidance, resources & referrals
Lucky De Market, Dan Dan from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
New Dolphin Market, San Jose from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
SEPT 6 15
Women's Health Check
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Transformative force of disability rights advocacy

By TIAVA TO'OMATA
NMPASA Projects Specialist

In the ongoing journey toward a more inclusive and equitable society, one of the most crucial transformative forces is the advocacy for disability rights. This movement, driven by passionate individuals, organizations, and communities, strives to break down barriers, challenge misconceptions, and ensure that the rights and dignity of people with disabilities are upheld. The importance of disability rights advocacy cannot be overstated, as it has the power to transform lives and reshape societal attitudes.

Disability rights advocacy is the active and intentional effort to promote the rights, well-being, and full participation of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of society. It encompasses a wide range of activities aimed at removing physical, social, and attitudinal barriers that hinder equal opportunities and access to essential services. At its core, disability rights advocacy seeks to create a world where every individual, regardless of their abilities, is treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.

Key aspects of disability rights advocacy

■ Breaking stigmas and stereotypes: Disability rights advocates work time in and time out to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions that perpetuate discrimination and exclusion. By sharing stories, raising awareness, and promoting accurate portrayals of people with disabilities, advocates help dismantle harmful narratives.

■ Promoting accessibility: Advocacy efforts focus on ensuring that physical spaces, information, and technologies are accessible to everyone. This includes advocating for accessible transportation, public buildings, websites, and communication methods to ensure inclusion for all.

■ Policy and legislation: Disability rights advocacy often involves lobbying for the enactment of laws and policies that protect the rights of people with disabilities. This can encompass areas such as anti-discrimination, education, employment, healthcare, and accessibility standards.

■ Empowering self-advocacy: Disability rights advocates work to empower individuals with disabilities to become self-advocates. This means equipping them with the tools, information, and confidence to speak up for their rights and needs.

■ Inclusive education: Advocacy for inclusive education ensures that children with disabilities have equal access to quality education alongside their peers. This fosters a diverse and enriching learning environment that promotes understanding and collaboration.

Disability rights advocacy is like a call to action, a call for change. It's about transforming, perhaps the stigma around how we think, and what we do in regard to individuals with disabilities. By supporting disability rights, we're making sure that everyone has a chance to shine and contribute to our communities. It's a way of making our world a better place for everyone, no matter their abilities.

The Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect the civil, legal, and human rights of individuals with disabilities throughout the CNMI. If you would like to know more information on disability rights and advocacy, as well as our programs and services, you can contact NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/74 or online at www.nmpasi.org. ***(PR)***

HONORING SCHOOL PRIDE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas High School Youth senator and Youth Congress vice speaker Peaches Fiona Bayot, right center, poses with MHS principal Jonathan Aguon, far left, and MHS vice principal Romolo Orsini, far right, and the members of the MHS Dolphin Pride Club, after presenting them with YC Commemorative Resolution 19-02, which commended the club for hosting the Commonwealth's first-ever Rainbow Prom. The event held last June aimed at celebrating self-expression and diversity of local LGBTIQIA+ youth from all high schools and their allies and was put together to coincide with the observance of Pride Month in the CNMI.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: September 21, 2023 CLOSING DATE: October 06, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary
2023-021	CDBG-DR Construction Inspector- Rota	$25,000.00-$30,000.00 per annum- Ungraded

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: NMHC Rota Field Office located in Sinapalo, Rota; NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

TINIAN FUEL SERVICES, INC.

PO Box 520800, Tinian, MP 96952
Tel. (670) 433-4427/28 Fax. (670) 433-4428

Tinian Fuel Services, Inc. has an opening for:

ACCOUNTING CLERK (1)

DUTIES: Compute, classify, and record numerical data to keep financial records complete. Perform any combination of routine calculating, posting, and verifying duties to obtain primary financial data for use in maintaining accounting records. May also check the accuracy of figures, calculations, and postings to business transactions recorded by other workers. Operate computers programmed with accounting software to record, store and analyze information.

QUALIFICATIONS: Four-year bachelor's degree major in management and accounting. Required college diploma, transcript of records and computer skills (Microsoft Office). Required to have 24 months of work-related skills, experience, knowledge and work.

WORKSITE LOCATION: San Jose Village, Tinian; Salary: $11.21 to $14.00/Hour; Work Hours: Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm; Overtime Available at 1.5 x base rate/hour; Frequency of Pay: Bi-Weekly; Deductions: All applicable CNMI and Federal Taxes; Benefits: Worker's compensation is provided.

CLOSING DATE: October 05, 2023

Interested applicants may submit their resume personally (walk-in) at our office located in San Jose Village, Tinian Tel No.: (670) 433-4428 or by emailing us their resume at service@tinianservice.com. Applicants may apply during weekdays only, Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm, excluding national holidays.

TINIAN FUEL SERVICES, INC.

PO Box 520800, Tinian, MP 96952
Tel. (670) 433-4427/28 Fax. (670) 433-4428

Tinian Fuel Services, Inc. has an opening for:

SALES MANAGER (1)

DUTIES: Direct and coordinate activities involving sales of products, services or other subjects of sale. Resolve customer complaints regarding sales and services. Review operational records and reports to project sales and determine profitability. Determine price schedule and discount rates. Monitor customer preferences to determine focus of sales efforts. Direct, coordinate, and review activities in sales and service accounting and record-keeping, and in receiving and shipping operations.

QUALIFICATIONS: Required to have bachelor's degree major in Accountancy with 24 months of work-related skills, experience, and knowledge. Required to have an occupation in Sales Managing. Required college diploma, transcript of records and computer skills (Microsoft Office).

WORKSITE LOCATION: San Jose Village, Tinian; Salary: $16.70/Hour; Work Hours: Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm; Overtime Available at 1.5 x base rate/hour; Frequency of Pay: Bi-Weekly; Deductions: All applicable CNMI and Federal Taxes; Benefits: Worker's compensation is provided.

CLOSING DATE: October 05, 2023

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Gogue appointed to lead the Guam-CNMI ESGR Committee

BARRIGADA, Guam— Cathy Gogue was recently appointed State Chair of the Guam-Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Committee, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Gogue is the seventh chair to serve since 1997 and the first woman chair to lead the organization in Guam andthe CNMI. Gogue will assume her three-year position beginning Oct. 1 2023.

Her appointment was confirmed by U.S. Navy Captain Jonathan R. Townsend, executive director, ESGR Headquarters, Alexandria, VA.

Gogue

Gogue will take helm from retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Renie Llaneta, who served as state chair since 2021. As chair, she will oversee ESGR activities and its mission to foster a culture where employers support and value the military service of the Reserve Component employees. Gogue will lead the committee to serve as the principal means of communication between the Department of Defense, employers, RC Service members and the local community. She will be responsible for promoting the cooperation and understanding between employers and their Service member employees by advocating relevant initiatives, recognizing outstanding employer support of our National Guard and Reserve, and increasing awareness of applicable laws that protect the rights and entitlements of Service member employees.

ESGR, a Department of Defense office, was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve Component Service members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment. ESGR is supported by a network of nearly 3,000 volunteers in 54 committees located across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam-CNMI (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Gogue is the administrative director of the Guam Public Defender Service Corporation, and a current board member of Guam's Professional Engineers, Architects and Land Surveyors. She has been part of the ESGR committee since 2012 serving as a Public Affairs Director and Employer Outreach Director.

For more information about the Guam-CNMI ESGR committee, contact Angel Vibar at 671-344-1283 or visit www.esgr.mil. ***(PR)***

NMC students play pivotal roles in rebuilding community

The CNMI has endured numerous natural disasters over the years, and Northern Marianas College students and graduates are on the front lines helping to expand the resilience of the CNMI community by actively engaging in helping displaced community members secure new homes.

In particular, Crystal Songsong Seidler, a current NMC student, and Joey Duenas Mostales, who graduated from NMC in 2011, currently work under the Federal Emergency Management Agency as crew leads for the Individuals and Household Program.

NMC

NMC alumni Joey Duenas Mostales, left. and Crystal Songsong Seidler, right, crew leads with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, at one of the houses constructed under FEMA's Permanent Housing Construction program.

In their roles as crew leads, Seidler and Mostales assist community members in securing essential funds for temporary housing, home repairs or replacements, hazard mitigation, and other disaster-related expenses. However, their primary focus lies in FEMA's permanent housing construction program.

Seidler, who is currently pursuing two associate degrees from the college, said that her job as a crew lead is very rewarding.

"The most gratifying aspect of my job is the ability to help disaster survivors get back into their repaired or newly constructed homes," Seidler said. "It is always emotional but very rewarding to hold a position where I can assist those in need on a daily basis."

Seidler attributes her success in managing the program due to the knowledge she continues to gain from NMC. As a full-time employee, a mother of three, and a student, she encourages other parents who are looking to develop their education to start at the college.

NMC

From left, Joey Duenas Mostales and Crystal Songsong Seidler

"There is an array of degree programs and certificates that you can obtain to further advance your career," Seidler said. "It is never too late to complete your college education and be an inspiration to your children."

"Also—follow your passion, whether it is helping people in the healthcare industry, or in the education field," Seidler added. "It is always great to contribute and give back to our community. Lastly, don't be afraid to get out of your comfort zone and try new things."

Mostales, who earned both his associate's and bachelor's degrees from NMC, said that his time at the college helped him with his current role at FEMA.

"As an NMC alum, my journey with FEMA has allowed me to give back to the community that nurtured me," Mostales said. "The most rewarding aspects of my job include assisting others during challenging times, maintaining a healthy work-life balance, and honing the skills I acquired during my time at NMC, which have been invaluable in my career."

Mostales, who is also a military veteran, encourages members of the community to pursue higher education if they haven't done so already.

"Attending college is the key to success," Mostales said. "I pursued my college education to set a good example for my oldest son, who also pursued his degree and ultimately became a doctor. With pursuing higher education, especially at NMC, you'll be able to gain the experience you need and discover your passion."

For more information about the college's degree programs, visit www.marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

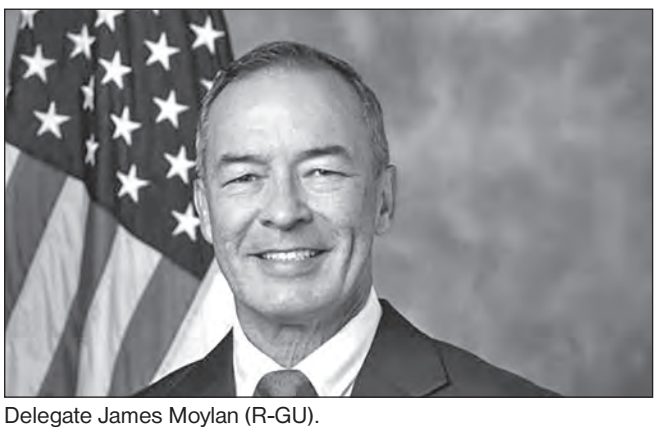
ROUTE 36

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios delivers his remarks during the ribbon cutting last week for the completed $17.01-million Route 36 Phase 2 construction of all-weather roadway along Windward/Chalan Kalabera Road located in the northeastern coast of Saipan.

Moylan introduces C.H.I.L.D Act of 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate James Moylan (R-GU) along with co-lead Congressman Don Davis, Congressman Buddy Carter, Congresswoman Diana Harshbarger, Congressman Don Bacon, and Congresswoman Aumua Amata Radewagen introduced the C.H.I.L.D Act of 2023.



Delegate James Moylan (R-GU).

This bill seeks to amend chapter 77, sec 1591 of title 18, United States Code, by raising the mandatory minimum years of imprisonment for engaging in the trafficking of any persons under the age of 18. The current law states that if convicted of trafficking a victim under the age of 14, there is a minimum of 15 years imprisonment. If convicted of trafficking a victim between 14 and 17 the minimum sentence is 10 years imprisonment.

Child sex trafficking unfortunately remains a pressing issue in the United States. In 2021, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received over 17,200 reports of child sex trafficking in all 50 U.S. states, affecting every type of community including cities, rural areas, and tribal land. According to a NCMEC report from 2021, out of the 25,000 missing runaway children, one out of six are likely to be victims of sex trafficking.

Offenders often target vulnerable children who are of lower income, live in dangerous circumstances, and seek out better lives for themselves. Victims come from all backgrounds and become trapped in a never-ending cycle of threats, abuse, false promises, isolation, shame, and debt. These victims are deprived of something every child deserves: a future.

This legislation would

■ Make the sentence for traffickers exploiting victims under the age of 18 the same regardless of their age. A child is still a minor and there should not be differentiation.

■ Increase the minimum sentence to 25 years for those who are convicted of child trafficking. This will convey the serious nature of their crime and ensure that traffickers know they will be punished if they continue to exploit minors.

By enacting more stringent penalties, this bill aims to bring justice for the victims and families affected by child trafficking and issues a strong statement to traffickers, who leave a lifetime of scars on innocent children.

"My message is clear, sex trafficking is a heinous crime that will not be tolerated. Current laws are too soft on these criminals. I am committed to ensuring stricter laws and harsher punishments are implemented for anyone who harms innocent children. If enacted, this law would send out a strong message to those who engage in child sex trafficking," stated Moylan.

"Anyone who is found guilty of trafficking children must face justice," said Davis. "That is why I am proud to cosponsor the Combating Human-Trafficking of Innocent Lives Daily (C.H.I.L.D.) Act, much-needed legislation that increases criminal punishment for human traffickers. Congress must protect our children from exploitation, sexual abuse, and other unspeakably evil acts at all costs."

"Human trafficking is one of the greatest crimes imaginable, yet it is a sad reality that we must defeat. Thank you to Congressman Moylan for his leadership on this important issue as we fight for the lives and futures of vulnerable children." said Radewagen.

"Those engaged in trafficking innocent children and should be punished to the fullest extent of the law," said Bacon. "Anyone under the age of 18 is particularly vulnerable, and we should be making every effort to protect minors from this evil, and raising the mandatory minimum sentencing will help protect children."

"Joe Biden's open borders policies continue to aid cartels and criminals in their human trafficking operations, and are putting the lives of American children at risk," said Harshbarger.

"I am honored to join my colleagues in support of the CHILD Act, a critical piece of legislation which will increase the minimum prison sentences for child traffickers and deter traffickers from operating within our communities, from the Southern Border to East Tennessee.

"Stealing a child's future is an unforgivable act. This bill will bring justice to the millions of innocent families and victims who have been abused by human traffickers by ensuring that these criminals are punished to the fullest extent possible," said Carter. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

No more half measures on climate change. The next generation is right to demand an end to fossil fuels

Thousands of people are mobilizing for what could be the biggest climate march in the U.S. in years in New York City on Sunday. It's one of many protests across the globe over the next few days with a simple demand: President Joe Biden and other world leaders must phase out fossil fuels.

You have to respect the uncompromising clarity of the March to End Fossil Fuels message: Stop approving new fossil fuel projects, phase out drilling on public lands, declare a climate emergency and provide a just transition to renewable energy.

Because you're not seeing such a clear vision from the men and women with the power to do something about the climate crisis, only weak-kneed language and half measures.

In the run-up to the COP 28 United Nations climate summit in November in Dubai, nations are talking instead about phasing out "unabated" fossil fuel emissions. This would allow countries to keep burning oil, gas and coal as long as they also use some kind of carbon capture or removal technology to offset its effects on the atmosphere.

This kind of double-speak is revealing, because it shows how many politicians are unwilling to buck powerful fossil fuel interests. Like oil and gas companies, they want to suggest we can have it both ways and fight the climate crisis without dismantling the fossil fuel based-system that is causing it. But that sets a dangerously low bar. If we don't at least aim for the end of fossil fuels, where do you think we'll actually end up a generation from now?

By contrast the young people spearheading the climate protests are quite clear about what actions are required to ensure a livable planet for future generations. In addition to marches and rallies on Sunday, they are also staging a global, youth-led strike on Friday, actions that are timed to take place in advance of a U.N. Climate Ambition Summit in New York on Sept. 20.

World leaders should take their cues from these young activists. They have the most at stake and are explicit about the need to abandon the fossil fuels that are polluting the air and overheating the planet. They are tired of broken promises, incrementalism and spineless politicians who won't stand up to their fossil fuel industry backers.

Activists are right to call out Biden for climate hypocrisy. He has broken his campaign promise of "no more drilling on federal lands, period. Period, period, period," by approving ConocoPhillips' massive Willow oil drilling project in Alaska. Earlier this year he signed legislation to fast-track the Mountain Valley pipeline to move methane gas from West Virginia to southern Virginia. He hasn't declared a climate emergency, while claiming he has "practically" done so already.

See NO on Page 9

Zelenskyy is coming to Washington to ask for more Ukraine aid. Congress should say yes

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

After three months of grueling combat against Russian troops, Ukraine's summer offensive is finally showing results — but not the dramatic breakthrough Ukrainians and their supporters in the West hoped for.

The Ukrainians' goal was to penetrate Russia's heavily fortified defenses in southern Ukraine and cut the main roads between Russia and Crimea. They fought through the first of three Russian lines in late August, and they're now assaulting the second.

That's progress, but far short of where they wanted to be.

It's been "a breach, but not a breakthrough," said Michael Kofman, a military analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, who has made several visits to the battle zone. Each day's progress "is measured in the hundreds of meters," not kilometers or miles, he said. "It's kind of a slugfest."

Ukraine's advance could still pick up speed before its ammunition runs out and winter sets in, Kofman added. Even so, it's clear that this war will continue well into 2024, and probably beyond.

Ukraine's leaders are determined to keep fighting, since the alternative is to see their country taken over by Russia's Vladimir Putin. But their army has not advanced far enough to make Putin decide to cut his losses.

He's betting that the United States and its European allies will tire of sending money and weapons to Kyiv.

Another reason for Putin to keep fighting is the prospect that Donald Trump might return to the White House. Trump praised Putin's invasion last year as "genius" and has claimed that if he were elected, he would end the war "in 24 hours," which sounds like pulling the plug on Ukraine.

So it will take another year of fighting plus a presidential election before Putin even considers negotiations.

Meanwhile, Ukraine needs help from the United States and Europe to keep fighting. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will visit Washington this week to meet with President Biden and members of Congress.

One of his top requests to Biden will be for the U.S. Army Tactical Missile System, also known as ATACMS (pronounced "attack 'ems"). The missiles' 190-mile range would allow Ukraine to hit Russian bases, equipment and ammunition well behind the front lines.

The Pentagon has rejected the request for reasons including fear that Ukraine might use ATACMS against targets deep inside Russia, potentially provoking a superpower crisis. But in recent weeks, unnamed administration officials have said Biden is close to sending the missiles, a decision that could nudge other countries to send them too.

But the ATACMS aren't likely to arrive in Ukraine soon enough to affect this summer's offensive. Even then, they might not have made a decisive difference.

"There's no silver bullet that's going to transform the situation," said Alexander Vershbow, a former U.S. ambassador to Moscow. "But ATACMS should be useful during the winter in impeding the Russians' efforts to rebuild their fortifications."

Meanwhile, Biden is asking Congress for another $24 billion in military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine. The proposal has drawn noisy opposition from pro-Trump Republicans, but with support from GOP hawks and Democrats, it's likely to pass after vigorous debate.

Polls suggest that most voters support continued aid to Ukraine, but Republicans are increasingly opposed. A CBS News poll this month found that 54% of Americans favor sending more weapons to Kyiv, but 61% of GOP voters disagree.

It's understandable that many Americans are tired of seeing taxpayer dollars spent on a faraway war. The United States has already sent Ukraine more than $50 billion in military aid.

So Biden should make a clearer case that helping Ukraine is in the U.S. national interest, not merely an act of charity.

The president and his aides often cite a somewhat abstract principle to make their case: that big countries ruled by autocrats should not be allowed to invade their neighbors and seize territory.

But the stakes in this war also come down to realpolitik — or, if you'd like to stick to English, harsh reality. A Russian victory in Ukraine would be a disaster for the United States, one even more damaging than our chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan.

It would make Putin the strongman of Eastern Europe, empowered to intimidate his neighbors with threats of more invasions.

And it would make Russia's three-way alliance with China and North Korea a powerful axis of autocrats, reaching deep into Asia.

The choice for the U.S., in short, boils down to abandoning Ukraine and handing Putin a victory, or giving Ukraine a chance to keep fighting until Putin agrees to negotiate a reasonable peace.

Those may not be palatable choices, but foreign policy is like that most of the time.

And, as Zelenskyy said last week: "It's not a movie with a happy end."

EDITORIAL POLICY

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How to write (or not write) the college application essay this fall

By ADAM PATRIC MILLER
Chicago Tribune

Adam Patric Miller has taught high school English for more than 25 years in three states. He is the author of "A Greater Monster."

"Whatever you do when you write your college application essay," I'll say as I've always said to my high school seniors, "Don't ever write a college application essay."

Then I'll explain that no human (we'll talk human writing, too, because AI will rear its blinking-eyed head), especially the admissions officers who read so many of "these things" wants to read about who you are, where you grew up, who your hero is, the event that changed your life or how you went to Guatemala for the summer to rebuild a village and purify water for hundreds. What those folks want to read, the thing that will wake them from their somnambulatory reading, is a publishable piece of prose.

Like some high school English teachers who teach seniors, especially those seniors whose parents' anxieties outstrip their child's and whose net worth—aided and abetted, by the entitlements born of the systemic racism my colleagues around the country aren't supposed to talk about when they teach—I've become a master of how to knock the seniors off their game. The game is where a student is conditioned to look at him or her or their selves as a commodity to be sold at the Ivy League market or whatever other competitive college might have them (and their parents' money).

So I'll tell them, "Yes, you may use the personal statement you honed over the summer because mom made you do it and hired a pricey tutor to help you write it." But then I lure them into writing something else, step by step, and tell them to trust me. If all goes well I'll get to the point where I can talk about language on the level of rhythm, sound, and meaning, so that each of their essays will have something in common with the work of Michel de Montaigne where the reader can't help but be intrigued by their attempt to make sense of their lives in a complex world.

This summer, I've been reading articlessuch as "Applicants, Colleges Want to Know More About You and Your 'Identity'" and I go through the same thought process I've done for years: quit teaching and make bank tutoring wealthy kids to write publishable prose to get into Ivy League schools. I see myself sleeping in (it's 5:30 a.m. as I write this on my first day back to school), then sitting comfortably at home, cup of coffee in hand, preparing for my first Zoom meeting with a kid in Manhattan whose private school isn't doing enough for what is now the one major factor that can tip the outrageous scales in their direction for early action, early decision, or whatever gets the pressure off their backs fast. And I could help them decide whether or not to dial in race. I know how to do that. But it's precisely because I know the rotten game so well that I won't: there's nothing further away from real teaching than making big bucks that way (like the guy who wrote essays for students to the tune of $2,000 a week).

In my teacher's heart I know that's phony. I also know there's nothing more phony than a writer leaning on his identity to get the golden ticket to the Ivies, even if this upcoming application season, private schools, private teachers, private tutors, will factor the decision into how students prepare their essays so they can perpetuate the capital that pays their salaries and maintains the property values of the parents' neighborhoods. And it's because I know the playing field of American education is criminally skewed no matter what the not-so-Supreme Court rules, that I will ignore the most recent policy shift and stick to the basics of helping students connect to a topic that makes them scared, makes them sad, or makes them happy.

Once they connect to that, time for them to write a mess of words and sentences, pages of pure crap. Within that mess of drafting, however, a real teacher will help them see the thing that glimmers. And no, it's not Fort Knox gold they see or getting accepted to college or an A+. But that glimmering thing will give them the energy to revise and revise and revise until the music of their sentences reveals an image that our sham-meritocracy of an education system smudges away on the daily: the thing that cannot stay "when dawn goes down to day".

The painful realities of getting old

By STEPHEN J. LYONS
Chicago Tribune

Stephen J. Lyons is the author of six books, most recently "Searching for Home: Misadventures with Misanthropes."

On the occasion of my mother-in-law's 100th birthday, I asked for her thoughts as she contemplated a second century. "Keep your mind open and your mouth shut!" she quickly replied. I disagreed with the latter part of that sentence, but out of respect I kept my mouth shut.

Four months later she passed away. Her dying took more time than we would have wished, and it was both painful for her and for us to witness. A severe case of gout ignited and exacerbated other maladies, sending her small, fragile body into a tailspin from which she could not recover. "If I had a poison pill I would take it!" she said to her three children, all of whom are more than 70 years old.

She had survived two forms of cancer in her later years: thyroid and a more obscure cancer: Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia, a white blood cell cancer. Her thyroid was removed as was the cancer. For the second cancer she underwent only one chemo treatment and her symptoms disappeared.

When the gout attack took away her ability to stand she required full-time nursing care. We moved her from the assisted living apartment that she occupied for 10 years to a private room in our local nursing home. When the kind orderlies gently placed her in the van to be transported to her new home, she said, "Now, you remember to overdose me when we get there."

She was not joking.

She lasted 12 days, much of the time still in discomfort despite doses of morphine. When she would awake she would look around and sigh with disappointment, "Oh, so I'm still alive."

In those last months, the topic of death was never off limits with my mother-in-law. She was more than ready to for it. Her shoulders had disintegrated to the point she could barely lift her arms. Her knees were shot. Her feet were swollen. Using a walker was a precarious step-by-step challenge. She no longer attempted the trek to the dining room. Enough was enough.

Plans for her service were written and revised several times. She thought long obituaries were pompousscreeds. An expensive casket was a waste of money and a waste of a good tree. She opted for cremation, with the cremains to be placed in a simple, biodegradable urn, and buried next to her husband, who had died 23 years earlier.

She remarked one evening that no one should be sad about the passing of someone her age, someone who had lived a long, fulfilling life on a beautiful farm in Illinois. To her, the children who perish needlessly during mankind's senseless wars, or who are lost in the unforgiving currents of the Mediterranean trying to achieve a better life in Europe, were much greater tragedies. "Because they never even had a life," she said.

After six days she refused food. Her body was dying, had shut down and whatever biological impulse triggers hunger had vanished. There was nothing left to sustain. Morphine made her thirsty, but eventually she was too weak to even lift a glass of water. Her daughters took turns applying water to her parched lips with a lollipop-type of sponge. The hospice nurse put her on oxygen, not to extend life, which would have gone against her wishes, but for comfort. When the machine was removed her oxygen level sank to 58%. She died the next morning.

Is this what we want for our elderly loved ones?

Currently, much is made about the increase in longevity; how children born today might live to 150 years. The Population Division of the United Nations estimated that in 2015 there were 451,000 centenarians worldwide. By the year 2100 the number is estimated to be 25 million.

We are supposed to be enthralled by this news. But let's temper the enthusiasm with reality. The body will almost always break down. The mind spins off in many directions, some of them nightmarish. You become trapped, a prisoner of limited mobility, one broken hip away from disaster, often dependent on the care of children, elderly themselves.

We cannot control when we die, but shouldn't we be able to? My dear mother-in-law contributed money to Compassion & Choices, an organization in Oregon that advocates for "medical aid in dying" laws. i.e., assisted suicide. Ten states and Washington, D.C., now allow a compassionate avenue to depart this world on one's own terms. In a 2018 "Gallup Values and Beliefs" poll, 72% of Americans favored physician-assisted euthanasia.

No one should have to watch a loved one linger in excruciating pain when there is no chance for recovery. For what reason? To become another statistic in a longevity study? To await a parting soliloquy that only occurs in movies and novels?

A year earlier, when she turned 99, I had asked my mother-in-law if she had any advice as she looked ahead to another year. "Never get this old!" she said with conviction.

NO

From page 8

That's disheartening to Keanu Arpels-Josiah, 18, a high school senior and organizer with Fridays for Future NYC who spent hours phone banking for Biden in 2020 and will be marching in Manhattan on Sunday. "We're the generation that got him elected to take action on the climate crisis; we didn't elect someone to continue fossil fuel expansion," he said.

Biden has certainly made progress, notably by signing the first major U.S. climate legislation, the Inflation Reduction Act. Globally, there has been encouraging growth in renewable energy, booming demand for electric vehicles. Nations have made meaningful climate pledges under the Paris agreement, but avoiding catastrophic warming still depends on actually delivering those pollution cuts, and going further and faster.

But there aren't many other hopeful signs to point to, while the bad news piles up. Greenhouse gas emissions reached another all-time high in 2022. This summer was the hottest ever recorded. The U.S. has already experienced a record number of billion-dollar disasters this year—and it's only September.

And there are good reasons for skepticism about how much will actually be done at COP 28. It's being hosted by Sultan Al Jaber, the head of the country's national oil company, which is such an obvious conflict that it's like an arms dealer brokering peace talks.

Some will say that activists' demands are unreasonable or that their focus on eliminating the fossil fuels causing climate change is naive. The world economy, after all, is still overwhelmingly powered by oil, gas and other fossil fuels and it may be impossible to replace 100% of them with pollution-free alternatives, at least in the near term.

But this push for the end of the era of fossil fuels is a principled stand that has helped this important grassroots movement focus and gain traction recently. Youth climate activists scored a landmark victory last month in Montana, winning a case in which the judge found there is a "fundamental constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment" and climate.

When we see people marching through the streets of Manhattan, we should all listen and join them in demanding a world without fossil fuels.

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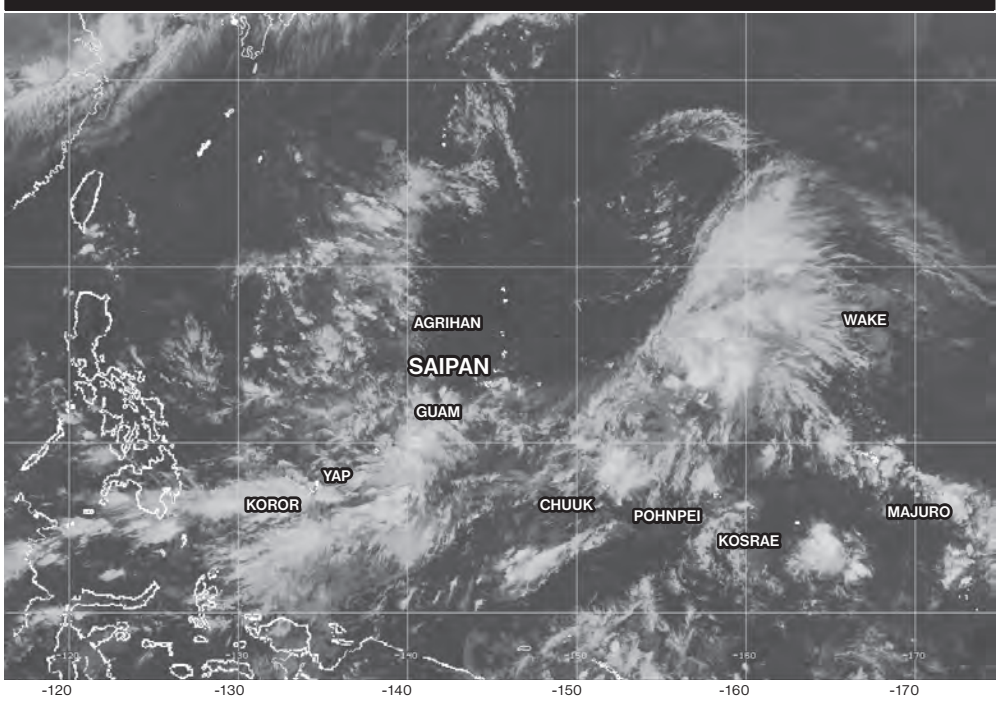
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of showers.	Mostly cloudy. A 30 percent chance of showers.
87° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:33 AM, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows scattered showers moving through the Guam and Rota waters with isolated showers moving through the Tinian and Saipan waters. The Ipan buoy reveals an east-northeast swell of 4 to 5 feet with 2 to 3 foot wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	87° / 76°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	87° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	85° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	55° / 52°
Beijing	Sunny	77° / 54°
Hong Kong	Rain	84° / 79°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87° / 75°
London	Mostly Sunny	59° / 41°
Los Angeles	Sunny	82° / 63°
Manila	Thunderstorms	88° / 79°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	61° / 39°
Miami	Thunderstorms	89° / 79°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	68° / 63°
Osaka	Rain	73° / 66°
Paris	Mostly Sunny	63° / 43°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	73° / 63°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	81° / 63°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	88° / 70°
San Francisco	Sunny	69° / 53°
Seoul	Sunny	72° / 54°
Tokyo	Thunderstorms	77° / 66°
Washington, DC	Showers	69° / 66°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:05 AM	6:14 PM
Friday	6:05 AM	6:13 PM
Saturday	6:06 AM	6:12 PM
Sunday	6:06 AM	6:12 PM
Monday	6:06 AM	6:11 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	11:01 AM	10:25 PM	-
Friday	12:00 PM	11:20 PM	-
Saturday	1:01 PM	-	-
Sunday	-	12:21 AM	2:01 PM
Monday	-	1:25 AM	2:58 PM

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
5:26 AM	Low Tide	0.13
12:25 PM	High Tide	1.65
5:39 PM	Low Tide	1.25
10:40 PM	High Tide	1.71

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1 up to Sep 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR 111	7:05AM	9:05AM	7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily up to Sep 4
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily from Sep 5

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1 up to Sep 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
PR110	11:40PM	5:35AM+1	6
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Hyatt, 500 Sails partner up again to offer free canoe rides

In collaboration with 500 Sails, Hyatt Regency Saipan brings back the culturally authentic canoe rides at the resort's ocean front, home to Skipper's Beach Bar each Thursday from 4pm to 6pm.

After its first successful event last year, it is the second time that Hyatt Regency guests and local residents can enjoy a free excursion aboard a canoe—built and inspired by indigenous sailing traditions.

This unique and memorable experience will be supported by post card perfect sunset backdrops.

In 2014, Emma and Pete Perez established 500 Sails with a vision that was dedicated to revive, promote, and practice of the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands. In order for this to be successful, 500 Sails vows to unite traditional cultural values into modern life to build a healthy community.

500 Sails Community Programs and Development director Kuen-Hee Han said, "500 Sails is very excited to be given this opportunity to be present on Saipan's most famous site, Hyatt's Micro Beach."

"This will be a great way to whet the appetites of guests and communities immersing themselves in the maritime culture.," she added

According to Simon Graf, general manager of Hyatt Regency Saipan, working with and supporting the community is one of the fundamental pillars of Hyatt's World of Care. "Over the past 65 years, care has been at the heart of everything that we do at Hyatt. Our goals, particularly in the areas of social and environmental sustainability were defined by understanding what is important to our colleagues, guests, customers, owners, investors, and communities," he said.

"Many thanks to 500 Sails for selecting us for the continued partnership and thriving these respected cultural exposures on our ocean front. Here at Hyatt, we call our guests discoverists, explorists, and globalists—a very similar comparison to the deep heritage to the people in Marianas who connected their world and broadened their horizon by building boats and sailing into the unknown. There is no better way than experiencing these cultural assets first hand right on Micro Beach and confident that these activities cross promote many aspects of Saipan and we are honored to be part of the collaboration," Graf added.

Complimentary and educational canoe rides take place every Thursday from 4pm to 6pm until November 2023 on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For more information, visit saipan.regency.hyatt.com and click "news & events" tab or call (670) 234-1234 loc. 5811. ***(PR)***

HYATT

500 Sails' complimentary and educational canoe rides take place every Thursday from 4pm to 6pm until November 2023 from the beach of Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Did your kids buy gear in Fortnite without asking you?

» FTC says you could get refund

WASHINGTON (AP)—Parents whose kids bought virtual gear without their knowledge on the popular Fortnite video game could soon be able to get a refund.

U.S. regulators are starting to notify more than 37 million people by email that they may be eligible for compensation as part of a legal settlement with Fortnite's maker, Epic Games Inc.

The Federal Trade Commission announced late last year that Epic Games would pay $520 million in penalties and refunds to settle complaints revolving around children's privacy and its payment methods that tricked players into making unintended purchases.

Part of that $520 million consists of $245 million in customer refunds, as part of a settlement finalized in March. It's meant to cover some of the costs of unwanted V-Bucks, the game's in-game currency, or virtual items such as outfits or cartoonish purple llama loot crates.

Consumers have until Jan. 17 to submit a claim.

Epic Games had also agreed to pay a $275 million fine for allegedly collecting personal information on Fortnite players under the age of 13 without informing their parents or getting their consent. It was the biggest penalty ever imposed for breaking an FTC rule.

According to the FTC, those eligible for refunds include Fortnite users charged in-game currency for items they didn't want between January 2017 and September 2022; those whose child made charges to their credit card without their knowledge between January 2017 and November 2018; and those whose account was locked after they complained to their credit card company about wrongful charges.

Epic Games said after settling the case in December that it implemented additional safeguards to prevent unintended purchases. In an updated statement Tuesday, it referred people to the FTC's page.

McCarthy faces almost impossible task trying to unite House GOP and fund the gov't

WASHINGTON (AP)—Facing fresh challenges to his leadership, Speaker Kevin McCarthy is trying to accomplish what at times seems impossible—working furiously to convince House Republicans to come together and pass a conservative bill to keep the federal government open.

It's a nearly futile exercise that could help McCarthy keep his job, but has little chance of actually preventing a federal shutdown. Whatever House Republicans come up with is nearly certain to be rejected by the Senate, where Democrats and most Republicans want to fund the government.

In one dramatic sign of defeat Tuesday, House Republicans were even voting against their own defense bill. During a rowdy afternoon vote, the usually popular bill was turned back from consideration, 212-214, after five hard-right conservatives helped sink it. They want to see an overall plan from McCarthy.

McCarthy simply walked off the House floor. "Look, the one thing you're going to learn about me: I like a challenge — I don't like this big a challenge — but we're just gonna keep doing it until we can make it," McCarthy told reporters.

With time dwindling, Congress faces a Sept. 30 deadline to pass the broader government funding legislation and get a bill to President Joe Biden's desk to become law. Otherwise, the U.S. faces massive federal government closures and disruptions. Plans for another vote Tuesday to advance the overall spending bill were shelved.

"The ball's in Kevin's court," said Republican Rep. Ralph Norman of the Freedom Caucus.

The latest House government funding proposal, a compromise between members of the hard-right Freedom Caucus and the more pragmatic Main Street conservatives, was almost dead on arrival, left sputtering even after McCarthy loaded it up with spending cuts and Republican priorities in a border security package.

Behind closed doors Tuesday, the speaker was trying to stress the political repercussions of a government shutdown to Republicans, warning them that no party wins with a closure.

Unlike last week when an angry and frustrated McCarthy unleashed foul language on his colleagues, he tried a different tack when addressing his members privately in the Capitol basement.

Appearing cool, calm and collected, McCarthy cast the funding plan as just a proposal and left time for rank-and-file members to debate, according to Republicans familiar with the meeting.

Still, one Republican after another rose to tell McCarthy that the current plan would not have their votes. With a slim majority, he needs almost every Republican on board.

Rep. Stephanie Bice, R-Okla., one of the negotiators for the Main Street group, urged her colleagues later to not let the "perfect be the enemy of the good."

The showdown over the usually popular defense bill shows the difficulty ahead—it was the second time McCarthy had tried to advance the measure after he abruptly withdrew it from consideration last week.

The attempt to soothe tensions among Republicans comes as tempers are flaring and as big personalities try to seize the upper hand—some trying to lead and others hoping to disrupt any plans for compromise.

Florida's two leading conservatives, Matt Gaetz and newcomer Byron Donalds, are sniping in the halls and across social media, as Gaetz criticizes the deal Donalds and others struck as insufficiently conservative.

And freshmen Rep. Victoria Spartz, R-Ind., pointedly attacked McCarthy as a "weak speaker."

One seasoned lawmaker Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark., warned the infighting could derail the House GOP, much the way it did for past speakers like John Boehner and Paul Ryan. Both retired earlier than expected amid constant threats of ousters.

Womack said he fears there is a "larger fight" brewing "that is more of a personality nature because of the conflict between certain members and the speaker."

The monthlong funding package that McCarthy is pushing would impose steep spending cuts of more than 8% on many government services, while sparing defense and veterans accounts. It would last for 31 days in hopes of giving House Republicans time to approve the more traditional government funding bills.

The White House issued a memo detailing cuts from the Republican plan, saying it would mean fewer border patrol agents, school teachers and aides, Meals on Wheels for seniors and Head Start slots for children, among other cutbacks.

"Extreme House Republicans are playing partisan games with peoples' lives and marching our country toward a government shutdown," the White House said.

Nation

Biden exhorts world leaders at UN to stand up to Russia

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—President Joe Biden made his case before the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday that the world must remain united in defending Ukraine against Russian aggression, warning that no nation can be secure if "we allow Ukraine to be carved up" as he tries to rally support for Kyiv's effort to repel a nearly 19-month-old Russian invasion that has no end in sight.

The U.S. president called on world leaders to not let support for Ukraine diminish, arguing that Russia is counting on countries to grow tired of prolonged conflict in Kyiv which will "allow it to brutalize Ukraine without consequence." Russia alone is standing in the way of a resolution, Biden argued, saying that Moscow's price for peace was "Ukraine's capitulation, Ukraine's territory and Ukraine's children."

"I ask you this: If we abandon the core principles of the United States to appease an aggressor, can any member state in this body feel confident that they are protected?" Biden said in his address. "If we allow Ukraine to be carved up, is the independence of any nation secure?

He continued: "I'd respectfully suggest the answer is no."

The president's forceful rhetoric on Ukraine appeared aimed not just for a global audience but for Washington, where an increasingly isolationist strain of the Republican Party is jeopardizing the prospects of the U.S. successfully replenishing the steady flow of aid that has gone to Kyiv since the war began in February 2022.

The Biden administration has asked Congress to greenlight an additional $24 billion in security and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, but Republicans who control the House have all but ignored that request as lawmakers scramble to ensure government funding remains flowing beyond the end of September. Animated by the views of former President Donald Trump, a vocal faction of House Republicans remain steadfastly opposed to more Ukraine aid, even as other GOP lawmakers, primarily in the Senate, continue to advocate support for Kyiv to dissuade Russia from spreading its attacks beyond Ukraine's borders.

AP

President Joe Biden addresses the 78th United Nations General Assembly in New York, Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2023.

"We have to stand up to this naked aggression today and deter other would-be aggressors tomorrow," Biden said in his U.N. address. "That's why the United States—together with our allies and partners around the world—will continue to stand with the brave people of Ukraine as they defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity and their freedom."

Other senior members of the Biden administration were making their case on Tuesday, as Defense Secretary Lloyd Austinpushed allied defense leaders in remarks at Ramstein Air Base in Germany to "dig deep" and provide more air defense systems for Ukraine to help the country wage its counteroffensive.

Indeed, the broader message is intended to resonate beyond Moscow and even Capitol Hill. Washington remains on guard against Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, where competing territorial claims have caused tension in the region. Beijing also wants to reunite the mainland with the self-governing island of Taiwan, a goal that raises the prospect of another war.

During his address, Biden described the partnerships that the U.S. government was fostering around the globe—from Africa to the Indo-Pacific—that he said were creating economic, security and other advancements, even as he stressed that those relationships were not about "containing any country"—a clear reference to Beijing.

"When it comes to China, let me be clear and consistent," Biden said. "We seek to responsibly manage competition between our countries so it does not tip into conflict. I've said we are for de-risking—not decoupling—with China."

Biden emphasized that Beijing and Washington need to cooperate on climate, and referenced recent natural disasters—devastating heat waves, droughts and floods around the globe—as part of a "snapshot" that tells the "urgent story of what awaits us if we fail to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and begin to climate-proof the world."

Despite his own emphasis on climate as a priority, Biden does not plan to attend a special summit on climate that U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres will host on Wednesday, where countries are encouraged to bring new ideas and proposals on how to further cut emissions and combat climate change. Officials played down Biden's absence at the climate summit, and said John Kerry, the U.S. climate envoy, will attend in Biden's place.

1st Biden impeachment inquiry hearing set for Sept. 28

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Republicans plan to hold their first hearing next week in their impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden.

The hearing—scheduled for Sept. 28—is expected to focus on "constitutional and legal questions" that surround the allegations of Biden's involvement in his son Hunter's overseas businesses, according to a spokesperson for the House Oversight Committee.

Republicans—led by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy—have contended in recent weeks that Biden's actions from his time as vice president show a "culture of corruption," and that his son used the "Biden brand" to advance his business with foreign clients.

The spokesperson also said Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., chairman of Oversight, plans to issue subpoenas for the personal and business bank records of Hunter Biden and the president's brother James Biden "as early as this week." McCarthy appointed Comer to lead the inquiry in coordination with Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan and Ways & Means Chairman Jason Smith.

The White House has called the effort by House Republicans in the midst of the presidential campaign "extreme politics at its worst."

"Staging a political stunt hearing in the waning days before they may shut down the government reveals their true priorities: To them, baseless personal attacks on President Biden are more important than preventing a government shutdown and the pain it would inflict on American families.," Ian Sams, a White House spokesman, said in a statement Tuesday.

McCarthy announced the impeachment inquiry last week after facing mounting pressure from his right flank to take action against Biden or risk being ousted from his leadership job. At the same time, the speaker is struggling to pass legislation needed to avoid a federal government shutdown at the end of the month.

The California lawmaker launched the inquiry without a House vote, and it's unclear if he would have enough support to approve it from his slim GOP majority. Some lawmakers have criticized the evidence so far as not reaching the Constitution's bar of "high crimes and misdemeanors."

An inquiry is a step closer to an impeachment of the president, a constitutional tool which until recently was rare in Congress.

But McCarthy and other Republicans have been facing months of direct challenges from Trump—who is now the Republican front-runner to challenge Biden in next year's election—to move forward with proceedings against his opponent. The action also is seen as an effort to distract attention from the indicted former president's legal challenges and turn a negative spotlight on Biden.

The impeachment inquiry is expected to build upon the work that Comer and others have done since gaining the House majority in January. There are several investigative lanes but Comer has been tasked with following the money that went through Biden's son's and brother's various businesses accounts.

The chairman has claimed repeatedly that the Biden family engaged in an influence-peddling scheme, but has yet to directly tie any of that to the president himself.

Republicans have focused much attention on an unverified tip to the FBI that alleged a bribery scheme involving Biden when he was vice president. The bribery claim, which emerged in 2019 and was part of Trump's first impeachment, relates to the allegation that Biden pressured Ukraine to fire its top prosecutor in order to stop an investigation into Burisma, the oil-and-gas company where Hunter Biden was on the board.

Biden's Democratic allies intensify pressure for asylum-seekers to get work permits

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—As more than 100,000 migrants arrived in New York City over the past year after crossing the border from Mexico, Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul have begged President Joe Biden for one thing, above all others, to ease the crisis:

"Let them work," both Democrats have said repeatedly in speeches and interviews.

Increasingly impatient leaders of Biden's party in other cities and states have hammered the same message over the last month, saying the administration must make it easier for migrants to get work authorization quickly, which would allow them to pay for food and housing.

But expediting work permits isn't so easy, either legally or bureaucratically, experts in the process say. Politically, it may be impossible.

It would take an act of Congress to shorten a mandatory, six-month waiting period before asylum-seekers can apply for work permits. Some Democratic leaders say the Biden administration could take steps that wouldn't require congressional approval. But neither action seems likely. Biden already faces attacks from Republicans who say he is too soft on immigration, and his administration has pointed to Congress' inability to reach agreement on comprehensive changes to the U.S. immigration system as justification for other steps it has taken.

The Homeland Security Department has sent more than 1 million text messages urging those eligible to apply for work permits, but it has shown no inclination to speed the process. A backlog of applications means the wait for a work permit is almost always longer than six months.

As frustrations have mounted, Hochul has said her office is considering whether the state could offer work permits, though such a move would almost certainly draw legal challenges. The White House has dismissed the idea.

Immigrants are frustrated as well. Gilberto Pozo Ortiz, a 45-year-old from Cuba, has been living, at taxpayer expense, in a hotel in upstate New York for the last three months. He says his work authorization is not yet in sight as social workers navigate him through a complex asylum application system.

"I want to depend on no one," Ortiz said. "I want to work."

In Chicago, where 13,000 migrants have settled in the last year, Mayor Brandon Johnson and Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker wrote Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to ask for parole for asylum-seekers, which, they say, would allow him to get around the wait for a work permit.

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey, who declared a state of emergency over the migrant influx, wrote Mayorkas that work permits represent "an opportunity to meet employer needs, support our economy, and reduce dependency among new arrivals." And 19 Democratic state attorneys general wrote Mayorkas that work permits would reduce the strain on government to provide social services.

Asia

Kremlin: Russia, China must edge closer to counter Western efforts to contain them

MOSCOW (AP)—A senior Kremlin official on Tuesday called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted China's top diplomat for security talks.

Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia's Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that Moscow "seeks progressive development and strengthening of the Russian-Chinese relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation."

"Amid the campaign unleashed by the collective West that is aimed at the double containment of Russia and China, it's particularly important to further deepen Russian-Chinese coordination and interaction on the inetrnational arena," Patrushev said.

He noted that Putin is set to hold "substantive" talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during next month's trip to Beijing to attend a summit of the Chinese Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

Patrushev, a longtime Putin associate, reaffirmed Russia's "invariable" support for Beijing's policy on issues related to Taiwan, the western Xinjiang region and Hong Kong, which he said "are being used by the West to discredit China."

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has conducted increasingly large military drills in the air and waters around the island. Chinese authorities also have sought to eradicate any possibility of unrest in regions that are home to sizeable ethnic and religious groups, including Tibetans and the Uyghur community in Xinjiang, north of Tibet, the harsh policies that have drawn strong criticism from the West.

The Kremlin has continuously expressed support for Beijing as Russia and China have grown increasingly close while their relations with the West deteriorate.

Last month, China helped engineer an expansion of the BRICS partnership, which invited six more countries to join what has been a five-nation bloc that includes China, Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa.

Beijing has sought to project itself as neutral in the Ukraine conflict, even while it has refused to condemn Moscow's actions and declared last year that it had a "no-limits" friendship with Russia. China has denounced Western sanctions against Moscow, and accused NATO and the United States of provoking Putin's military action.

Beijing has also proposed a peace plan that was largely dismissed by Ukraine's allies that insist that Moscow must withdraw its forces from the neighboring country.

Wang arrived in Russia on Monday on a four-day visit following his weekend talks with U.S. President Joe Biden's national security adviser in Malta. He began his trip by conferring with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"The more violent the unilateral actions of hegemony and bloc confrontation become, the more important for us to keep up with the times, show a sense of duty as great powers, and further fulfill our international obligations," Wang said at the start of Monday's talks with Lavrov.

Southeast Asia nations hold first joint navy drills near disputed S. China Sea

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—The Association of Southeast Asian Nations began its first joint naval exercise on Tuesday at a time when several member countries are responding more strongly to increasing Chinese assertiveness in the area.

The non-combat drills, named ASEAN Solidarity Exercise, include joint maritime patrol operations, search and rescue operations, and humanitarian and disaster relief, Indonesian military chief Adm. Yudo Margono said.

He said the five-day exercise in Indonesia's Natuna waters aims to boost military ties among the ASEAN nations and enhance interoperability. The drills also involve civilian groups involved in humanitarian relief and disaster prevention.

ASEAN nations have taken part in naval exercises before with other countries—including both the United States and China—but this week's drills are the first involving just the bloc and are being read by many as a signal to China.

China's "nine-dash line," which it uses to demarcate its claim to most of the South China Sea, has brought it into tense standoffs with rival claimants Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines, with Chinese fishing boats and military vessels becoming more aggressive in the disputed waters.

The line also overlaps with a section of Indonesia's exclusive economic zone extending from the Natuna Islands. Margono initially said the exercises would take place in the North Natuna Sea at the edge of the South China Sea, a fault line in the rivalry between the U.S. and China, following meetings of ASEAN defense officials in Bali in June.

However, Indonesia, which holds the rotating chair of ASEAN this year, decided to move the drills to the South Natuna Islands, away from the disputed area, apparently to avoid any reaction from Beijing.

China and ASEAN signed a nonbinding 2002 accord that called on rival claimant nations to avoid aggressive actions that could spark armed conflicts, including the occupation of barren islets and reefs, but violations have persisted.

China has come under intense criticism for its militarization of the strategic South China Sea but says it has the right to build on its territories and defend them at all costs.

"Those who carry out any exploration or activities in that area must not violate state territory," Margono said after an opening ceremony for the exercise attended by ASEAN military leaders on Batam island next to Singapore. "That has been clearly regulated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea."

Asked whether ASEAN was sending a stronger message against China's competing territorial claims in the South China Sea, Margono replied, "We have had a firm stance."

He told reporters that ASEAN has agreed to hold military exercises annually. In the future, they will be expanded to full war drills involving the army, navy and air force, he said.

Indonesia and China enjoy generally positive ties, but Jakarta has expressed concern about what it sees as Chinese encroachment in its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea. Increased activities by Chinese coast guard vessels and fishing boats in the area have unnerved Jakarta, prompting its navy to conduct a large drill in July 2020 in waters around Natuna.

Despite its official position as a non-claimant state in the South China Sea, Indonesia renamed part of it the North Natuna Sea in 2017 to underscore its claim that the area, which includes natural gas fields, is part of its exclusive economic zone. Similarly, the Philippines has named part of what it considers its territorial waters the West Philippine Sea.

World

'Russia has turned food, energy, even children into weapons against Ukraine'

AP

Ukranian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2023 at United Nations headquarters.

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday that Russia is "weaponizing" everything from food and energy to abducted children in its war against Ukraine—and he warned world leaders that the same could happen to them.

"When hatred is weaponized against one nation, it never stops there," he said at the U.N. General Assembly's annual top-level meeting. "The goal of the present war against Ukraine is to turn our land, our people, our lives, our resources into weapons against you—against the international rules-based order."

The war in Ukraine has deepened major global supply disruptions caused by the pandemic, driving a huge spike in food and energy prices, jolting the global economy and increasing hardship in many developing countries.

Decades-old energy supply channels to Europe from Russia, a major oil and gas producer, were halted or severely disrupted by the war due to sanctions, trade disputes, pipeline shutoffs and a major push by Western countries to find alternative sources. Both Russia and Ukraine also are major grain exporters, and Russia withdrew this past summer from a deal that allowed shipments of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy pointed to the food and fuel crunches, and he highlighted what Ukraine says were kidnappings of at least tens of thousands of children taken from Ukraine after Moscow's invasion: "What will happen to them?"

"Those children in Russia are taught to hate Ukraine, and all ties with their families are broken. And this is clearly a genocide," Zelenskyy said in remarks that ran 15 minutes—the meeting's often-disregarded time limit.

The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant in March for Russian President Vladimir Putin and another official, accusing them of abducting children from Ukraine. Russian officials have denied any forced transfers of children, saying some Ukrainian youngsters are in foster care.

Left behind and grieving, survivors of Libya floods call for accountability

DERNA, Libya (AP)—Abdel-Hamid al-Hassadi survived the devastating flooding in eastern Libya, but he lost some 90 people from his extended family.

The 23-year-old law graduate rushed upstairs along with his mother and his elder brother, as heavy rains lashed the city of Derna on the evening of Sept. 10. Soon, torrents of water were washing away buildings next to them.

"We witnessed the magnitude of the catastrophe," al-Hassadi said in a phone interview, referring to the massive flooding that engulfed his city. "We have seen our neighbors' dead bodies washing away in the floods."

Heavy rains from Mediterranean storm Daniel caused the collapse of the two dams that spanned the narrow valley that divides the city. That sent a wall of water several meters high through its heart.

Ten days after the disaster, al-Hassadi and thousands of others remain in Derna, most of them waiting for a word about relatives and loved ones. For Hassadi, it's the 290 relatives still missing.

The floods inundated as much as a quarter of the city, officials say. Thousands of people were killed, with many dead bodies still under the rubble or at sea, according to search teams. Government officials and aid agencies have given varied death tolls.

The World Health Organization says a total of 3,958 deaths have been registered in hospitals, but a previous death toll given by the head of Libya's Red Crescent said at least 11,300 were killed. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says at least 9,000 people are still missing.

Bashir Omar, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross, said the fatalities are in the thousands, but he didn't give a specific toll for the number of retrieved bodies, since there are many groups involved in the recovery effort.

Many Derna residents, including women and children, are spending all their time at collection points of bodies. They are desperate to know who is inside body bags carried by ambulances.

Inside a school in the western part of the city, authorities posted photos of the retrieved bodies.

Anas Aweis, a 24-year-old resident, lost two brothers and is still searching for his father and four cousins. He went to the Ummul Qura school in the Sheiha neighborhood to inspect the exhibited photos.

Environment

Tens of thousands march to kick off climate summit

» Demand end to warming-causing fossil fuels

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—Yelling that the future and their lives depend on ending fossil fuels, tens of thousands of protesters on Sunday kicked off a week where leaders will try once again to curb climate change primarily caused by coal, oil and natural gas.

But protesters say it's not going to be enough. And they aimed their wrath directly at U.S. President Joe Biden, urging him to stop approving new oil and gas projects, phase out current ones and declare a climate emergency with larger executive powers.

AP

Oliver Moore, 7, of Montpelier, Vermont, listens to a speaker during a rally to end the use of fossil fuels, in New York, Sunday, Sept. 17, 2023.

"We hold the power of the people, the power you need to win this election," said 17-year-old Emma Buretta of Brooklyn of the youth protest group Fridays for Future. "If you want to win in 2024, if you do not want the blood of my generation to be on your hands, end fossil fuels."

The March to End Fossil Fuels featured such politicians as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and actors Susan Sarandon, Ethan Hawke, Edward Norton, Kyra Sedgwick and Kevin Bacon. But the real action on Broadway was where protesters crowded the street, pleading for a better but not-so-hot future. It was the opening salvo to New York's Climate Week, where world leaders in business, politics and the arts gather to try to save the planet, highlighted by a new special United Nations summit Wednesday.

Many of the leaders of countries that cause the most heat-trapping carbon pollution will not be in attendance. And they won't speak at the summit organized by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a way that only countries that promise new concrete action are invited to speak.

Organizers estimated 75,000 people marched Sunday.

"We have people all across the world in the streets, showing up, demanding a cessation of what is killing us," Ocasio-Cortez told a cheering crowd. "We have to send a message that some of us are going to be living on, on this planet 30, 40, 50 years from now. And we will not take no for an answer."

This protest was far more focused on fossil fuels and the industry than previous marches. Sunday's rally attracted a large chunk, 15%, of first-time protesters and was overwhelmingly female, said American University sociologist Dana Fisher, who studies environmental movements and was surveying march participants.

Of the people Fisher talked to, 86% had experienced extreme heat recently, 21% floods and 18% severe drought, she said. They mostly reported feeling sad and angry. Earth has just gone through the hottest summer on record.

Among the marchers was 8-year-old Athena Wilson from Boca Raton, Florida. She and her mother Maleah, flew from Florida for Sunday's protest.

"Because we care about our planet," Athena said. "I really want the Earth to feel better."

People in the South, especially where the oil industry is, and the global south, "have not felt heard," said 23-year-old Alexandria Gordon, originally from Houston. "It is frustrating."

Protest organizers emphasized how let down they felt that Biden, who many of them supported in 2020, has overseen increased drilling for oil and fossil fuels.

"President Biden, our lives depend on your actions today," said Louisiana environmental activist Sharon Lavigne. "If you don't stop fossil fuels our blood is on your hands."

Nearly one-third of the world's planned drilling for oil and gas between now and 2050 is by U.S. interests, environmental activists calculate.

Leaders see hope in tackling deadly climate change and public health problems together

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—Trying to lessen climate change's sweeping impact, experts are hoping that attempts to improve the sputtering global public health system and sometimes-stalled efforts to curb global warming through collaboration can combine—and create a better system for handling the problem along the way.

Leaders of both the World Health Organization and the upcoming climate negotiations said Monday that for the first time, they are going to devote a day during December climate talks to public health issues. By concentrating on how climate change is causing death and disease, they hope, nations may act more on the root cause: carbon pollution.

"Climate change is killing us, and climate change is a health crisis," said Vanessa Kerry, the World Health Organization's special envoy for health and climate change, CEO of Seed Global Health and the daughter of U.S. climate envoy John Kerry. "We shouldn't be measuring our failures in degrees Celsius but in lives lost."

As Climate Week starts in New York, ahead of a special U.N. Climate Ambition Summit on Wednesday, leaders looked at health as a key part of the climate-change fight, saying better and more spending on health was crucial.

Meanwhile, police said more than 100 protesters were arrested while blocking the New York Federal Reserve. They were targeting Wall Street for its funding of coal, oil and gas that trigger global warming and were blaming President Joe Biden, whose administration fanned out across the city to underscore how seriously the United States takes the problem.

"The threats to health in our changing climate are right here and right now. The climate crisis is a health crisis," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization. Reducing carbon and other air pollution "will save lives," he said. "The health of our future generations is at stake."

AP

Climate activists protest outside the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to call for an end to the use of fossil fuels, Monday, Sept. 18, 2023, in New York.

EFFORTS TO LIMIT FUTURE WARMING ARE OFF TRACK

A U.N. report earlier this month showed the world is way off track in its efforts to fulfill the 2015 Paris agreement and limit future warming, said Adnan Amin, the CEO of the upcoming climate talks, called COP28. So upcoming negotiations in Dubai are "one of the last chances you get to course-correct," he said. And a day devoted to public health "is where you can actually get traction for change."

"Lives and livelihoods are on the line all over the world," said Sultan Al Jaber, the COP28 president. He said 7 million people a year around the world die from air pollution, which is not technically the same as the carbon dioxide and methane that cause warming but often comes from similar sources.

The small African nation of Malawi found out just how deadly global warming is from a health perspective earlier this year, when Cyclone Freddy killed hundreds of people and massive malaria outbreaks followed, said Malawi President Lazarus Chakwera.

He said much of Africa's public health problems are connected to climate change. He and others mentioned the recent Libya flooding and said to expect public health problems in the future from that.

"At the heart of the fight against climate change is the need for adequate resources," Chakwera said at Monday's climate and health session.

Only 0.5% of the world's financial aid goes to public health and climate change, Al Jaber said. "That," he said, "is in no way acceptable or enough."

Maybe talking about lives that can be saved by spending more money on adapting to a warmer world—but also cutting back on carbon emissions—is a positive message that could change the way negotiators and leaders think about fighting climate change, said Maria Neira, the WHO director of climate change, environment and health.

SOME CHOSE MORE DIRECT ACTION

Hundreds of climate protesters had the world financial system in mind when they marched to the Wall Street area and blocked access to the New York Federal Reserve.

"It's important to send a message to world leaders, to Joe Biden, to the financial sector down here on Wall Street that the climate crisis is upon us and (demonstrate) the level of urgency we need them to respond with," said Jonathan Westin, an activist with Climate Organizing Hub.

Protestors have been targeting the fossil fuel industry and criticizing the United States' status as the No. 1 nation in the world in planning more future drilling for oil and gas.

"The one institution that can actually regulate Wall Street and make banks stop financing new oil, gas and coal infrastructure is the Fed," said Alicé Nascimento, campaigns director for New York Communities for Change.

"They have that power. So we want to make sure that they know that they need to use that power."

Life & Style

Michael J. Fox receives 2023 Elevate Prize Catalyst Award at Clinton Global Initiative

NEW YORK (AP)—Actor and philanthropist Michael J. Fox won this year's Elevate Prize Catalyst Award, which the "Back to the Future" star plans to use to further his foundation's work to find treatments for Parkinson's disease.

Fox, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease at the age of 29 in 1991, received the award at the Clinton Global Initiative, or CGI, conference on Tuesday in New York. The annual prize, which went to Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai last year, includes $250,000 from the Elevate Prize Foundation and support to amplify the winner's messaging.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who interviewed Fox onstage at CGI, credited him with research advances in understanding Parkinson's. "I don't think this work would have made the progress it has if Michael hadn't been so open," she said.

Fox said that once he got support from his family after his diagnosis, he did not hesitate about going public with his diagnosis.

"There's such shame associated with this illness," Fox said. "It's so ridiculous, this great need to keep it secret. The cruel thing of it is it's going to out you eventually."

However, he said there is no choice but to "keep trying to move the ball forward — whether it's world peace, climate change or this disease."

Former President Bill Clinton said he was "awestruck" by Fox. "I've known Michael J. Fox for a long time, and he looks better every time I see him," he said. "He is a brave, good man."

Joseph Deitch, founder of The Elevate Prize Foundation, called Fox "a lightning rod for good," as he presented him with the award.

AP

Actor Michael J. Fox speaks listens during a panel at the Clinton Global Initiative, Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2023, in New York.

"He is an icon," Elevate Prize Foundation CEO Carolina García Jayaram told The Associated Press in an interview. "He was able to use the power of his story to introduce to so many people what this disease was and make us care about it."

Garcia Jayaram said Fox embodies this year's CGI theme of " Keep Going " and was "the perfect person at the perfect time" as the more than $2 billion Fox's foundation has raised for research since it launched in 2000 has made a major difference in the understanding of the disease.

"I just can't think of a better person to inspire us all to face our challenges with that much stamina and honesty and vulnerability," Garcia Jayaram said. "It's scary to be that vulnerable and share something so personal to you and your family -- especially in his case when his job was to be a public figure. He did it anyway. Nothing will stop him."

Deborah Brooks, co-founder and CEO of the Michael J. Fox Foundation, said the award comes at an important time for the nonprofit. In April, a biomarker for Parkinson's disease was identified for the first time, a "seismic shift" that will help improve chances for creating treatments and tests that can detect the disease in living patients.

Rihanna, A$AP Rocky debut photos of their second child, a son named Riot Rose

NEW YORK (AP)—Rihanna and A$AP Rocky are giving the world the first look at their second child together, a boy they've named Riot Rose.

The 35-year-old pop star and the 34-year-old rap star dropped photos Tuesday of their family of four, including their second son, who was born Aug. 1, according to People and other reports.

The couple's first child, RZA, was born in May 2022.

Rihanna made her pregnancy public after her performance at February's Super Bowl halftime show, when the bump that was visible in the tight clothes she wore under her baggy red jumpsuit set off a wave of social media speculation.

The couple used the same street photographer, Diggzy, to shoot their new family snaps. In one, they're leaning against a car with their kids. In another, A$AP balances their oldest on his shoulders. Others show Rihanna smiling for the camera with one of her children in her arms.

Diggzy shot photos of the two in New York when they formally revealed their first pregnancy.

AP

A$AP Rocky, left, and Rihanna attend The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating the opening of the "In America: A Lexicon of Fashion" exhibition in New York on Sept. 13, 2021.

Actor Bijou Phillips files for divorce from Danny Masterson after rape convictions

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Bijou Phillips has filed for divorce from Danny Masterson, days after the former "That '70s Show" star was sentenced to 30 years to life in prison for two rape convictions.

Phillips, a 43-year-old actor, filed a petition in Santa Barbara Superior Court on Monday to end her nearly 12-year marriage to the 47-year-old Masterson, according to the court's website. The couple has a 9-year-old daughter. No further details were immediately available.

An attorney for Phillips did not respond to emails, and a representative for Masterson declined comment. Masterson maintains his innocence and his attorneys have said they plan to appeal, contending there were problems with evidence and constitutional issues with his conviction.

AP

Danny Masterson, right, and his wife Bijou Phillips arrive for closing arguments in his second rape trial, May 16, 2023, in Los Angeles.

Phillips sat with other Masterson family members in court throughout two long trials, the first of which ended in a mistrial, the second of which ended in a conviction on two of three rape counts from 2003.

She wept when in court when the guilty verdicts were read on May 31, and showed similar emotion at times during his Sept. 7 sentencing hearing, when a judge gave Masterson a prison term that will require him to be held for 25 1/2 years before he is eligible for parole.

In a letter to the judge prior to Masterson's sentencing, Phillips praised him as a husband and father.

"I can say that Danny has literally been a life-saving partner to me," Phillips wrote, an apparent reference to Masterson's care for her and their daughter after Phillips had a kidney transplant in 2017.

Son neglects aging mom when possessive girlfriends come along

DEAR ABBY: My son's former wife was difficult -- manipulative, spoiled and possessive. I tried to get along with her, but no matter what I did, she gave me no respect and turned my son against me. They have been divorced for six years. He began dating a few years ago, and each woman is a carbon copy of the ex-wife. He falls right back into the same pattern of ignoring me and letting his girlfriends "possess" him. I'm deeply hurt. I don't understand why he feels he has to choose between them and me. He is my son, and I shouldn't have to compete for his love.

I'm getting older now and have asked him for some help, but he refuses. I would just like a regular phone call and to see him. I am no longer invited to his house for holidays, nor does he randomly call just to talk. He has a new girlfriend, and it's back to the same old pattern. Please advise me.

LOW PRIORITY IN OHIO

DEAR LOW PRIORITY: Please accept my sympathy. I know you are hurting. It seems your son is more attentive to you when he's between girlfriends but has tunnel vision when a new woman enters his life. For your sake, it's important you begin concentrating on building a reliable support system that is independent of him. To accomplish this, you must be willing to lend support to others, which will give you less time to be lonely. Volunteering may be the way to begin, whether for a charity, a political organization or your place of worship. There is so much need out there; you will feel better once you start filling it.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: After 37 years of marriage, all of a sudden, my husband has a problem with how I speak. He says it's my "tone." I can no longer discuss anything with him because it always ends up in an argument, not about the actual words I say, but how I say them. He can't seem to help himself. He constantly criticizes something about whatever I say. He has taken my voice away, and I feel invisible. He talks to me, but I'm supposed to only listen. If I ask a question or make a comment, he gets mad because I'm "interrupting him." I can no longer add to or participate in the conversation. After all these years, I can't communicate. It's like he hates the sound of my voice. Please tell me what to do.

SILENCED IN TEXAS

DEAR SILENCED: As a matter of fact, I do have a suggestion (or two). The first is that BOTH you and your husband should have your hearing checked. You may be speaking more loudly than you used to, or your husband may have developed some kind of sensitivity to sounds in your vocal range. Second, if your hearing and his are within normal ranges, and everything checks out during your next physical exam, ask your doctor for a referral to a licensed marriage and family therapist. The behavior you are describing seems to be controlling and disrespectful, and a therapist may be able to guide you before you lose your mind.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren

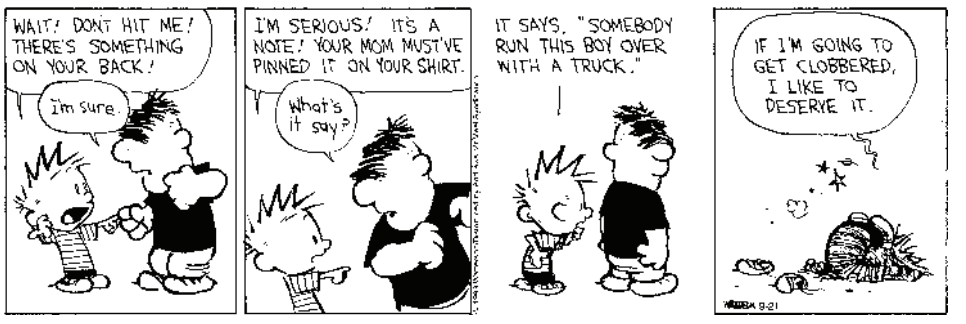
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WAIT! DON'T HIT ME! THERE'S SOMETHING ON YOUR BACK!
I'm sure.
I'M SERIOUS! IT'S A NOTE! YOUR MOM MUST'VE PINNED IT ON YOUR SHIRT.
What's it say?
IT SAYS, "SOMEBODY RUN THIS BOY OVER WITH A TRUCK."
IF I'M GOING TO GET CLOBBERED, I LIKE TO DESERVE IT.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

C'MON, ENO-THE SEASON IS WINDING DOWN. GET A HIT, HANG IN THERE TILL THE END!
STRIKE THREE!
BUT, THEN, IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO GO BUY YOUR PUMPKINS BEFORE THE GOOD ONES ARE PICKED OVER!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Dictionary entry
5 Watch chain
8 Miles away
12 Abbr. on a phone
13 "Entourage" character
14 Stuffing herb
15 Film composer Schifrin
16 San Francisco's — Hill
17 Rebuff
18 Depart via jet
20 Start of a nursery rhyme
22 Pod dweller
23 Recline
24 Challenge
27 Like some prescriptions
32 "... cone — cup?"
33 Disney deer
34 Airport screening org.
35 "Locksley Hall" poet
38 Recipe amts.
39 Payable
40 Lot vehicle
42 Sort of dive
45 Frozen spike
49 City bond, for short
50 Santa's aide
52 Life stories
53 PTA and NEA, e.g.
54 Chit
55 Coup d'—
56 Chimney grime
57 100 cts.
58 "Auld Lang —"

DOWN
1 CNN's Blitzer
2 October stone
3 Depend (on)
4 Sagging
5 Showy displays
6 Spanish gold
7 Lettuce variety
8 Attack
9 Car parts
10 Water, in Mexico
11 C&W artist McEntire
19 Symbol for iron
21 Boxing legend
24 Speck
25 Before
26 Spanish dance
28 Rock's Brian
29 Imaginary
30 Mentalist's gift
31 Wagner's "— Rheingold"
36 Debriefed person?
37 "— -haw!" (cowgirl cry)
38 Clans
41 Room cooler, for short
42 Med. plan options
43 Continental currency
44 Former Nevada senator Harry
46 Mayor's domain
47 Cash advance
48 Villa d'—
51 Bathroom, in London

Solution time: 24 mins.

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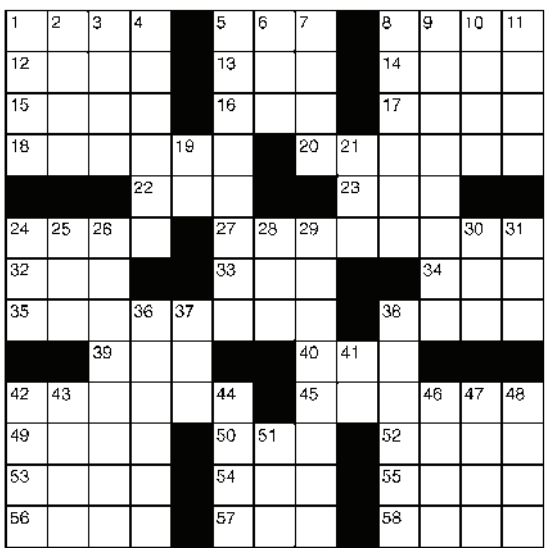
B	U	S	Y	■	Y	E	S	■	R	E	S	T

Yesterday's answer 9-21



STUMPED? For answers lo today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18÷ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Alfonso Ribeiro, 52; Nancy Travis, 62; Bill Murray, 73; Stephen King, 76.

Happy Birthday: Check your emotions at the door and refuse to let anyone get under your skin this year. You have plenty to gain if you focus on what matters and the goal you want to achieve. Be honest, regardless of what others suggest. Your word and reputation matter if you want to rise to the top. Embrace change for the right reason; something good will happen. Your numbers are 7, 15, 21, 28, 32, 43, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* A force play will help push you forward. Don't be reluctant to use your skills, knowledge and experience to get your way. Fear is the enemy; believe and trust in your ability to make yourself heard. Nurture a meaningful relationship and romance will follow. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't make promises you can't keep or let temptation lead you astray. Use experience and intelligence as you decide your next move. Getting out with peers will give insight into who you can trust. Saying no to temptation will position you for success. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Choose to observe rather than react. Emotions will surface, dictating feelings that put you in an awkward position. Limit sharing personal information, and stick close to home and away from people eager to make you look or feel bad. Put yourself first. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Keep your emotions out of the workplace. Don't make promises you can't keep or let temptation lead you down a slippery slope. You've got plenty to offer if you use your skills creatively. Don't be afraid to take the road less traveled. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Be a good listener and offer thoughtful suggestions, not cash. Adjust your living conditions to make your life easier. Build a stronger connection with peers; doors will open. Keep your secrets and emotions to yourself. A positive attitude will attract more attention. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* The moment of truth comes at a cost. Emotions are high, and someone will judge your actions. Think each step through and forge ahead with precision and detail. You've got this; all you must do is be yourself and do things your way. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't be lazy; take the plunge and make things happen. Put your energy into rubbing elbows with people who can help you push your objective forward. The more you spread a positive attitude and charming picture of prospects, the more resilient you will become. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll find it challenging to divide your time between work and play. Neglecting someone close to you will trigger an unexpected response. A heart-to-heart talk can help avoid an unnecessary implosion affecting your emotional well-being or lifestyle. Honesty is essential. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* What you do will impact the outcome of a sensitive situation better than what you say. Dedicate time to tidying up loose ends and honoring your promises to avoid looking bad or sending the wrong message. Avoid third-party interference. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* A change at home will be worth the cost involved. Don't argue over trivialities when compromise will help keep the peace and give you more leeway regarding something that truly matters to you. Choose your battles carefully and spare yourself grief. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Refuse to let what others do bother you. Don't feel obligated to tag along or change your plans. A positive attitude and engaging in something that interests you will turn out better than anticipated and connect you to someone of interest. Follow your heart. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Check your ego at the door and maintain your integrity. Be a good listener and observer, and recognize when someone makes false claims. Trust your instincts and question anyone playing emotional games. Put temptation aside and spare yourself debt and disappointment. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are talkative, friendly and spontaneous. You are energetic and thorough.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5			1	7		2		
6			8		3			
				5				3
9		4		2				
7			5	3				8
		5		8			2	
3	5					9		
		1	9				3	
		9	3	1	7	6		

Difficulty: ★★★ 9/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	1	9	4	8	7	3	6	2
6	8	3	1	2	5	7	9	4
4	2	7	3	6	9	1	8	5
1	7	6	2	3	4	8	5	9
3	4	8	9	5	6	2	7	1
2	9	5	8	7	1	6	4	3
9	3	1	7	4	8	5	2	6
7	6	2	5	9	3	4	1	8
8	5	4	6	1	2	9	3	7

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

BLUEGRASS COUNTRY, KENTUCKY **Solution: 12 letters**

G	E	P	T	S	T	A	N	F	O	R	D	S	U	V
E	E	U	A	N	A	I	H	T	N	Y	C	E	A	E
R	L	O	Q	R	C	L	U	B	H	O	R	S	E	R
I	N	L	R	I	I	I	H	O	T	R	E	I	T	S
C	O	O	I	G	T	S	S	T	U	G	G	S	A	A
H	B	A	D	V	E	N	T	U	R	E	I	A	L	I
Ⓜ	Ⓡ	Ⓐ	Ⓕ	K	N	T	A	S	M	Y	O	O	P	L
O	U	H	I	R	S	A	O	N	A	B	N	P	E	L
N	O	H	L	E	A	U	D	W	I	L	M	O	R	E
D	B	A	R	H	T	N	D	O	N	A	E	N	O	S
I	W	O	T	H	R	I	K	T	C	E	R	O	L	D
N	F	R	E	E	M	S	T	F	A	R	C	Y	P	L
I	O	R	E	T	I	M	O	L	O	D	E	N	X	E
N	N	L	A	N	C	A	S	T	E	R	R	A	E	I
G	R	U	B	S	D	O	R	R	A	H	T	C	D	F

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Yesterday's Answer: Nail Art

The NEW **Treasury 54** can oe purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-856-232-2367)

Springer hits leadoff homer on birthday, Blue Jays beat the Yankees, 7-1

NEW YORK (AP)—George Springer celebrated his 34th birthday with his 57th career leadoff homer, Bo Bichette hit a two-run drive and the Toronto Blue Jays beat the New York Yankees 7-1 on Tuesday night.

Toronto stayed one game ahead of Seattle and Texas for the second AL wild card. The Yankees are seven back for the last playoff berth, needing to overcome the Mariners and Rangers.

Yusei Kikuchi (10-6) was pulled one batter into the sixth because of a left upper trap muscle cramp. Kikucki allowed one run in five-plus innings for his first win since Aug. 2.

Springer reached 20 homers for the eighth time when he connected off Clarke Schmidt (9-9). Springer also walked ahead of Bichette's first homer since Aug. 20.

Alejandro Kirk padded the lead with a two-run shot in the ninth.

AP

Toronto Blue Jays' George Springer celebrates after hitting a home run against the New York Yankees during the first inning of a baseball game Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2023, in New York.

ORIOLES 9, ASTROS 5

HOUSTON (AP)—Austin Hays had two homers and four RBIs as Baltimore beat slumping Houston, cutting the Astros' lead in the AL West to a half-game over Seattle and Texas.

Hays hit a three-run shot off starter Hunter Brown (11-12) to put the Orioles up 5-2 in the third inning. He followed with a solo shot in the seventh that made it 8-5.

Houston has lost four of five and six of eight. AL-leading Baltimore has won four straight and has a 2 1/2-game edge over second-place Tampa Bay in the AL East.

Ryan O'Hearn and Heston Kjerstad also homered for the Orioles. DL Hall (3-0) got two outs in relief and Cionel Pérez earned his second save.

PADRES 2, ROCKIES 0

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Blake Xander Bogaerts hit a two-run homer off Tyler Kinley (0-3) with two outs in the ninth to give the Padres their season-high sixth straight win.

Snell, who has never gone eight innings in the majors, threw 104 pitches before making way for Robert Suarez, who worked a perfect eighth. All-Star closer Josh Hader (1-3) came on to start the ninth and promptly allowed Brendan Rodgers' leadoff single. The last-place Rockies finished with two hits.

TWINS 7, REDS 0

CINCINNATI (AP)—Willi Castro hit a two-run homer and made two spectacular catches in center field, Kenta Maeda combined with four relievers on a four-hitter and Minnesota beat Cincinnati in another step toward its third AL Central title in five seasons.

Ryan Jeffers added a solo homer for the Twins, who opened an eight-game lead over second-place Cleveland with 10 to play.

Cincinnati, shut out for the 10th time, remained just outside playoff position in the National League.

RAYS 6, ANGELS 2

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Osleivis Basabe hit a tiebreaking two-run double in a four-run eighth inning and playoff-bound Tampa Bay topped Los Angeles.

Tampa Bay loaded the bases against Aaron Loup (2-3) before Basabe lined his double to center field. René Pinto followed with a two-run single.

Randy Arozarena homered for the AL wild card-leading Rays, who remained 2 1/2 games behind first-place Baltimore in the AL East. Yandy Díaz had three hits and Robert Stephenson (3-4) won in relief.

Logan O'Hoppe and Zach Neto homered for the Angels, who have lost six in a row.

MARLINS 4, METS 3

MIAMI (AP)—Jake Burger hit a game-winning single in the bottom of the ninth inning and Miami beat New York after blowing a late lead.

Josh Bell had an early RBI double and Braxton Garrett did not allow an earned run in six stellar innings for the Marlins, who are a half-game behind the Chicago Cubs for the final NL wild card.

All-Star infielder Luis Arraez, who leads the majors with a .354 batting average, was a late scratch from Miami's lineup because of a left ankle sprain.

Miami took a 3-1 lead into the ninth, but Tanner Scott (9-5) gave up a two-run double to Brandon Nimmo with two outs.

BRAVES 9, PHILLIES 3

ATLANTA (AP)—Ronald Acuña Jr. homered twice on his bobblehead night and stole his 67th base, leaving him one long ball shy of becoming Major League Baseball's first 40-60 player, and Atlanta beat Philadelphia to stop a four-game losing streak.

Spencer Strider (18-5) increased his major league-leading wins total and struck out 11 to increase his big league-high total 270 with his 17th career double-digit strikeout game, his 11th this season.

Acuña homered on the first pitch of the game from Cristopher Sánchez (2-5) and had another solo homer off Yunior Marte in the sixth. Acuña has a Braves record 33 leadoff homers, including seven this season.

NL East champion Atlanta avoided its first five-game skid since September 2017. Marcell Ozuna drove in three runs with three hits, including a two-run double, as the Braves outhit the Phillies 13-4.

BREWERS 7, CARDINALS 3

ST. LOUIS (AP)—William Contreras homered and Tyrone Taylor scored twice and drove in a run as Milwaukee downed St. Louis.

The Brewers stopped a two-game skid and reduced their magic number to clinch the NL Central to six.

Richie Palacios homered for the last-place Cardinals, who were eliminated from playoff contention.

Contreras' solo homer in the third snapped a 16-inning scoring drought for Milwaukee. The Brewers opened the fourth with four straight doubles. Willy Adames, Josh Donaldson, Taylor and Sal Frelick all doubled and scored to give Milwaukee a 5-2 lead.

Colin Rea (6-6), recalled Monday from Triple-A Nashville, allowed one run in 4 2/3 innings of relief.

DIAMONDBACKS 8, GIANTS 4

PHOENIX (AP)—Ketel Marte had four hits, Zac Gallen earned his 16th win and Arizona won its fourth straight game by beating San Francisco.

The Diamondbacks remained a half-game in front of the Chicago Cubs for the second of three National League wild-card berths. The Giants, who have dropped four of five, fell three games behind the Cubs for the final playoff spot.

Arizona trailed 2-0 early but took a 5-2 lead in the second inning, partly thanks to a daring double steal by Marte and Corbin Carroll that led to two runs when third baseman Wilmer Flores committed two errors on the play.

Marte and Carroll also had two RBIs apiece. Gallen (16-8) labored through five innings, giving up four runs on six hits and three walks.

CUBS 14, PIRATES 1

CHICAGO (AP)—Cubs rookie Alexander Canario hit a grand slam for his first major league home run in an eight-run eighth inning, and Chicago ended a five-game losing streak by routing Pittsburgh.

Cody Bellinger hit a three-run homer later in the eighth for the Cubs, who remained a half-game ahead of Miami for the final NL wild card.

Canario, a 23-year-old who debuted on Sept. 6, had five RBIs. He hit an RBI double in the sixth for his first big league hit.

Dansby Swanson and Seiya Suzuki also homered for the Cubs, and Suzuki had three of Chicago's 12 hits. The Cubs are 10-1 against the Pirates this season.

MARINERS 7, ATHLETICS 2

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—J.P. Crawford homered in the ninth inning and Jarred Kelenic hit a pair of RBI singles to support Luis Castillo's eighth consecutive win, leading Seattle over Oakland.

Castillo (14-7) has won three straight starts and is 8-0 over his last 12 since a July 14 loss to Detroit. The Mariners remained tied with Texas for the final AL wild card and closed within a half-game of AL West-leading Houston.

The A's (46-105) lost their sixth in a row and fell 59 games below .500 for the first time since the Philadelphia A's were 47-106 on Oct. 2, 1920.

Oakland manager Mark Kotsay was ejected in the fifth by first base umpire Jansen Visconti for arguing a check-swing.

The game was played under smoky skies from wildfires in Northern California and Oregon.

RANGERS 6, RED SOX 4

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Josh Jung hit a tiebreaking single in a two-run seventh inning and Texas beat Boston in its bid for a playoff berth.

Adolis García launched his career-best 35th homer for the Rangers, his first since coming off the injured list.

Texas, which ended a four-game losing streak, remained tied with Seattle for the third AL wild card. Both teams closed within a half-game of first-place Houston in the AL West.

The Rangers play the Mariners in seven of their last 10 games.

DODGERS 3, TIGERS 2

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Max Muncy's base hit with two outs in the ninth inning scored Mookie Betts with the winning run, and Los Angeles defeated Detroit for its fifth consecutive victory.

Betts got aboard with a single for his third hit of the night and advanced to second when Will Smith was hit by a pitch. Muncy then lined a curveball from Alex Lange (7-5) into right field, and Betts beat the tag at home plate.

J.D. Martinez homered and Alex Vesia (2-5) worked a scoreless ninth as the NL West champions reduced their magic number to three for a first-round playoff bye and home-field advantage in the Division Series.

Spencer Torkelson and Parker Meadows went deep for the Tigers.

ROYALS 7, GUARDIANS 6

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—MJ Melendez homered and drove in three runs, late-season revelation James McArthur struck out three straight batters to end an eighth-inning threat, and Kansas City held off Cleveland.

Maikel Garcia had three hits and Nick Loftin added two RBIs for the last-place Royals, who have won five of six. They ended a five-series losing streak to the Guardians and will go for the sweep of their AL Central rivals on Wednesday.

Alec Marsh (2-8) earned the win despite a shaky showing after opener Steven Cruz, but it was McArthur who stole the show. His three punchouts left two in scoring position in the eighth, setting up Collin Snider to handle the ninth for his first career save.

Logan Allen (7-8) allowed four runs and eight hits in three innings.

NATIONALS 4, WHITE SOX 3

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pinch-hitter Joey Meneses launched a three-run homer in the seventh inning and Washington defeated Chicago.

Jackson Rutledge, a 2019 first-round draft pick, allowed two runs over 6 1/3 innings in his first home start for Washington. The last-place Nationals had lost six of seven.

Luis Robert Jr. and Yoán Moncada homered for the White Sox, who have lost 13 of 18.

Robert Garcia (2-2) retired both hitters he faced. Kyle Finnegan gave up Moncada's run-scoring single in the ninth but earned his 26th save.

Meneses connected off Bryan Shaw. Aaron Bummer (4-5) took the loss.

NFL making data-driven progress on leg muscle injury prediction, prevention

AP

Cleveland Browns linebacker Anthony Walker Jr. (5) is taken off the field after being injured during the second half of an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers in Cleveland, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)— The NFL 's health and safety initiatives focus heavily on concussions, the face of football's ever-present danger.

Torn knee ligaments are instant headlines, ending seasons for star players in a split second.

There's an even bigger thief of time lurking within every team in the league.

Lower extremity injuries—those pesky and painful strains of the leg muscles—outrank all of the others in cumulative absences from practices and those precious 17 games on the schedule. The NFL has thus committed millions of dollars to better predict and prevent them—and their recurrence.

"I don't think a lot of people thought of this as a really big-ticket injury five or 10 years ago," said Dr. Christina Mack, a chief scientific officer at IQVIA, the health data firm that conducts third-party injury analysis for the league. "While it doesn't keep them out for the rest of the season, it's a highly impactful injury that does prevent players from playing. Then they need to manage the injury, their rehabilitation and make sure they don't have a recurrence. As we talk to the teams about it, we tell them, 'Reducing strains is a winning strategy.'"

Just ask Cooper Kupp.

The MVP of the Super Bowl for the 2021 champion Los Angeles Rams, Kupp's comeback from a severely sprained ankle that cut short his 2022 season was derailed by a hamstring strain that forced him out of practice on Aug. 1. He traveled to Minnesota to see a specialist after a setback. Then he was placed on injured reserve, requiring him to miss at least the first four games.

This season, 36 different players have landed on the inactive list for at least one game after appearing on the league-mandated report during the week with a leg muscle injury, including 28 for hamstrings, according to an Associated Press review.

In Week 1, 43 players landed on the injury report with either a hamstring, calf, groin or thigh problem, and 22 of them didn't play in the game. For Week 2, there were 50 such players and, again, 22 of them were inactive. Atlanta specialist Cordarrelle Patterson (thigh), Dallas left guard Tyler Smith (hamstring), Dallas safety Donovan Wilson (calf) and Green Bay wide receiver Christian Watson (hamstring) are among the regulars who've yet to play because of leg muscle trouble.

Progress is being made, though.

Last season, overall injuries were down by 5.6% and preseason injuries hit a seven-year low the NFL attributed largely to the reduction of these leg muscle injuries.

Informed by the data harvested and analyzed by IQVIA, the league last year tightened up preseason practice time limits for the first four days on the field and again for the first four days of padded workouts. Players were required to wear biomechanical sensors during the ramp-up periods for further analysis during that critical window. What resulted was a 26% decrease from 2021 in leg muscle injuries reported during the first two weeks of training camp and a 16% drop for the entire preseason.

The scientific advisory board created by the NFL in 2016, which has spent most of its $40 million on concussion research, awarded a $4 million grant in 2021 for a four-year study of hamstring prevention and treatment that was launched by a team led by University of Wisconsin researcher Dr. Bryan Heiderscheit. Nearly three-quarters of all hamstring injuries in the league result in missed time.

Anyone who's ever tried to run fast without a proper warmup can attest to the vulnerability of the hamstring in a quick-burst sport such as football. The muscle crosses both the knee and the hip, for one, making it more susceptible to trouble.

Research has found that during acceleration from 80% to 100% of an athlete's sprint speed, the amount of mechanical energy the muscle must absorb increases by 50%.

"That's a big change in load on that muscle. It all of a sudden has not experienced that sort of load in quite some time and it may not be ready for it," Heiderscheit said. "What we strongly encourage all athletes to do is to make sure they respect speed and train at that full intensity enough where your muscle is conditioned for it."

Roughly 400 players from BYU, Indiana, North Carolina, Notre Dame and Wisconsin are being studied for three years each by Heiderscheit's team, using baseline offseason measurements such as sprint mechanics for all participants and deeper dives on those players who injure their hamstrings including MRI exams and post-rehabilitation strength tests. With assistance from the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, the data has been de-identified to keep competing teams from virtually spying on each other and won't be widely shared until the four-year project is finished, Heiderscheit said.

The hamstring study is just one snapshot of the NFL's widespread use of science and technology to try to keep players as healthy as possible, gains that are so desirable that all 32 clubs in this ultra-competitive league have committed to sharing as much data as possible.

"The big point was that no individual club could collect enough information based on their 90-man roster and ultimately their 53-man roster that would provide sufficient insight fast enough that they could make changes for the health of their players," NFL vice president Jeff Miller said.

"If you multiply what one team can do by 32 and the league is able to aggregate all of that information, we have a vastly greater data set that can provide us insights and opportunities to help the clubs change behavior."

Each offseason, IQVIA's researchers make the rounds with each club to discuss findings and plot strategy for injury prevention. The data collection has become almost a year-round exercise for teams and players as they try to find as many advantages as they can in the never-ceasing challenge of staying healthy.

"Obviously, soft tissue is something that is never going to go away," said Cleveland Browns linebacker Anthony Walker Jr., who suffered a season-ending quadriceps injury last year on a seemingly routine play.

"You can train as much as you want and go through the whole thing, but there's nothing you can do to replicate actual football and reaction, so I think the league is trying to figure out the best science. You see the rest days, the load management during training camp, backing guys down a little bit. I think the league and the teams are doing a great job."

Two 70-something coaches proving they still have what it takes to compete in NFL

By ARNIE STAPLETON
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The NFL's two septuagenarian coaches still have what it takes to compete in this ever-changing young man's game.

Forty-eight hours after celebrating his 72nd birthday, Pete Carroll led his Seattle Seahawks into Detroit and beat the hyped-up Lions 37-31 in overtime.

Despite starting 0-2 for the first time since 2001, Bill Belichick, who's about six months younger than Carroll, showed the same creativity as ever in unveiling a never-before-seen play to block a field goal attempt in the Patriots' 24-17 loss to Miami.

Detroit had been the darlings of the league after winning eight of its final 10 games last season, capped by a season-ending stunner at Lambeau Field that denied the Packers a playoff berth and put an emphatic end to Aaron Rodgers' tenure as Green Bay's superstar quarterback.

The "hype train," as coach Dan Campbell has dubbed it, picked up plenty of steam when Detroit beat Patrick Mahomes and the defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs at Arrowhead Stadium in the league's opening game.

Geno Smith guided the Seahawks on their longest drive of the game after Seattle won the overtime coin toss, capping a 75-yard masterpiece with a 6-yard touchdown strike to Tyler Lockett for a 37-31 win to take a tad of the luster off the Lions.

Belichick didn't win Sunday but showed he's ingenious as ever when his special teams coaches and players unveiling a never-before-seen man-in-motion play to block a field-goal try by Dolphins kicker Jason Sanders.

Brenden Schooler blocked the 49-yard attempt when he executed an innovative and deceptive play design the Patriots put in during the week.

While the rest of his teammates lined up in their standard defensive positions, Schooler stood about halfway between his teammates and his sideline. He went in motion, getting a running start and sprinting parallel to the line of scrimmage, timing his rush perfectly just as the ball was snapped.

His momentum allowed him to easily get around the Dolphins' edge protector and dive in nearly untouched for a block that teammate Kyle Dugger recovered.

"As soon as the ball was snapped and I felt myself in the momentum, carrying, I just knew I was going to get there," Schooler said.

Watch out for the copycats this weekend.

Raiders coach Josh McDaniels, who spent several years on Belichick's staff scheming innovative play designs, said he expects other teams to attempt to do the same thing Schooler did after watching the Patriots run the play to perfection.

"If it works, then it tends to be stolen," McDaniels said Monday. "That's what the nature of the profession of coaches is all about."

They'll need the right guy, however.

According to the NFL's NextGen Stats, Schooler was running 12.7 miles per hour when the ball was snapped and 13.19 mph when he blocked the kick.

Schooler said when special teams coordinator Cameron Achord and his assistants Joe Judge and Joe Houston drew up the play, "I thought to myself, I trust them but I haven't ever seen anything like this before."

Nobody had.

SIS teams notch wins in girls HS v-ball

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan International School Lady Geckos girls volleyball teams won both of their games in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2023-2024 last Tuesday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

SIS II first won against Saipan Southern High School Lady Mantas in two sets.

The Lady Geckos' communication with their bumps and returns proved pivotal to their easy wins against the Lady Mantas, 21-14, 21-12.

The Lady Mantas' two teams have yet to win this season and it was their lack of communication that was their downfall in most of their games.

Multiple returns and serves by the Lady Geckos' rotation of Kaylie Claveria, Kassidy Camacho, Morgan Finco, Stacey Arriola, Irene Park, Jeongbin Park, Ziting Wu, Eva Lizunova, Hoo Wang, and Irin Chung went unanswered as the Lady Mantas were unsure in their feet.

Whilst the Lady Mantas kept their fighting spirit up through the whole game, it wasn't enough to catch up to the ever-ballooning lead of the Lady Geckos in both sets.

SIS' varsity team then defeated Agape Christian School later in the evening, also in two sets.

LEIGH GASES
Saipan International School II's Morgan Finco, center, bumps a return during their game against Saipan Southern High School II in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls High School Volleyball League 2023-2024 last Tuesday night at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Lady Geckos' Aubrey Castro, Audrey Castro, Kaihtlyn Chavez, Julie Chavez, Euanne Kyra Claveria, Martha Culp, Phoenix Gross, Serin Chung, Yelin Park, Seo-Hee Lee, and Sophie Brasuell made it through the first set in a nail-biting 21-16 final.

At the start of the second set, they came back better and neutralized ACS with their anticipation, great saves, and more accurate kills, for a much easier time, 21-11.

In other results, MHS II defeated MCS II, 21-19, 21-14; Grace Christian Academy put up a tough fight against SSHS in three sets, 18-21, 21-19, 15-9; ACS II beat MHS III, 21-18, 21-17; and MHS edged MCS, 21-16, 21-18.

GES

From page 20

on the pitch with near misses for both teams. Then, the Mallards nipped the net in the 11th minute for their first lead of the game. It was short lived though as the Canaries' Izaiah Haro made it 2-2.

Haro took the lead for the Canaries in the 17th minute, 3-2, but the Mallards' Althea De Belen made it three all in the 20th minute.

It was over for the Canaries as Taku Rogopes scored the last two goals for the Mallards which was enough for the win.

In other results, Saipan International School blanked Brilliant Star School, 6-0; William S. Reyes Elementary School won a lopsided 16-0 game over Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School 2; Kagman Elementary School defeated Saipan Community School, 3-1; and GTC beat WSR 2, 6-2.

The games are every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 3:30pm, 4:30pm, and 5:30pm at the NMISTC in Koblerville. The playoffs are scheduled for Oct. 9 and Oct. 11 with the finals on Oct. 16.

SUNNY

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September monthly tournament to CWGA members.

Kim Sae Hee and Lydia Tan completed the Top 3 in the September competition with net scores of 69 and 71, respectively.

Hee shot a gross score of 80 following pre-handicap scores of 38 in the first nine holes and 42 in the last nine. Tan, for her part, carded a gross of 91 after the 20-handicapper fired 44-47 in the splits.

A total of 11 CWGA members took part in the CNMI Women's Golf Association's September monthly tournament. The rest of the field, with their net scores, in parenthesis are as follows: Yuko Togawa (73), Jang Eun Ae (73), Janet Torres (76), Flores Jones (76), Lorraine Babauta (77), Nirimai Koebel (79), Rose Rohringer (82), and Chung Eun Ae (gross 85).

The club continues to look for new members as the new season continues. For those interested in becoming a member of CWGA or for more information, contact CWGA president Yuko Togawa at 287-9856, vice president Lorraine Babauta at 287-0621, or treasurer Lou Kim at 783-7317.

CHCC

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ritory, while Masaharu tore up the paint with 10 markers.

D.J. Ong of CHCC did as much as he could to get them out of the gutters with his team-high 16 points, but it wasn't enough to catch up to PSS' hugely inflated 63-36 third quarter.

PSS put a stop to CHCC's run for a comeback and held them off to just 13 points, while PSS scored 25 more in the last quarter.

In the other game that night, Docomo Pacific won a close 56-45 game against CUC.

Docomo was better together with Shane Deleon Guerrero at the helm as he scored 31 of his team's 56 points. Meanwhile, CUC's main shooter was John Santos with 13 markers.

PSS 88 – Basa 16, Masaharu 10, Poole 9, T. Palacios 9, Olopai 9, Villagomez 7, Winkfield 7, E. Palacios 6, Valencia 5, Cabrera 4, Mendiola 4, Ferrari 2.

CHCC 49 – Ong 16, Tudela 8, Manglona 6, Lizama 5, Sablan 5, Lisua 4, Phillip 2, Ogarto 2, Nunez 1.

Scoring by quarters: 11-11, 34-22, 63-36, 88-49.

3rd Annual Run Saipan & Salty Skin Pacific 5K tomorrow

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The 3rd Annual Run Saipan & Salty Skin Pacific 5K is set for a sunset race tomorrow, Friday, Sept. 22, at 5:45pm.

The course is at the top of the Eloy S. Inos Peace Park in Puerto Rico.

The race always coincided with International Coastal Cleanup Day every Sept. 16, but was rescheduled due to it being a better date for the organizer.

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said, "It's still our collaboration with Salty Skin Pacific for promoting health and wellness with their company, just not coinciding with International Coastal Cleanup Day anymore. The ICC time always conflicted with PSS cross country races so we wanted to make it a sunset race this time."

Event T-shirts are available for participants, however, quantities are limited.

The fee is $10 and the race is nonrefundable.

Special discounts are available for Run Saipan members. Please check with your Run Saipan group for the promo code.

Click on the link below to register: https://raceroster.com/events/2023/80056/3rd-annual-run-saipan-and-salty-skin-pacific-5k.

In last year's race, Michael Mancao came in first overall with a time of 22:34. Rosemarie Chisato topped the women's category with a time of 28:26.

For more information, email runsaipan@gmail.com or contact (670)788-2336.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The 2nd Annual Run Saipan Salty Skin Pacific 5K participants pose for a photo after last year's race.

Springer hits leadoff homer on birthday, Blue Jays beat the Yankees, 7-1.

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Sports

SIS teams notch wins in girls HS v-ball.

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GES teams bag wins in co-ed soccer start

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Garapan Elementary School's two teams won their games on the opening day of the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League 2023-2024 at the Northern Mariana Islands Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Monday.

The GES Mallards 1 trumped Koblerville Elementary School Umangs 2, 3-1.

The Mallards' Jacob Borja drew first blood just a couple of minutes into the game. Both teams were finding their footing in the minutes to come until KobES' Patrick Jacoba equalized the game in the eighth minute.

Favor shifted to the Mallards once again as Andrey Ray scored their second goal in the 13th minute. The first half came and went with no retaliation from the Umangs, then in the 24th minute, the Mallards' Borja sealed their fate with another goal to make it 3-1.

As time wound down, the Umangs settled for the loss as they could not get past GES' goalie.

Later, GES 2 edged San Vicente Elementary School Canaries, 5-3.

The Canaries were up, 1-0, early from a goal by Wilson Aguilar. They didn't hold on long to the lead however, as the Mallards' Turbulence Hiroichi tied the game up in the eighth minute.

It was a back-and-forth battle

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Garapan Elementary School II co-ed soccer players go up against a San Vicente Elementary School player, center, during the first day of games of the NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League 2023-2024 at the Northern Mariana Islands Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Monday.

Sunny on fire in September tourney

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Hyun "Sunny" Son followed up her win in July by winning the CNMI Women's Golf Association's September monthly tournament last Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Coral Ocean Resort in Agingan.

The 55-year-old owner of Boss Karaoke overpowered the field with an eye-popping net score of 63.

Son finished with an excellent gross score of 77 after the 14-handicapper came away with a 39 in the front nine and a 38 in the back nine.

"The weather was a little hot that day, but the course was very good. My best hole is the 12th hole because it is a difficult hole for me, but I managed to par with two on without difficulty. The difficult hole for me is the eighth hole This is because the tee shot in the newly made tee box was shaking," she said, while sharing the honor of winning the

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hyun "Sunny" Son, sixth from left, poses with other CNMI Women's Golf Association members during their September monthly tournament last Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Coral Ocean Resort in Agingan.

CHCC schooled in inter-gov't/biz caging

LEIGH GASES

Team PSS poses for a photo during the parade of teams in the opening ceremony of the Inaugural R&J Wine and Liquor Inter-Gov't/Business League 2023 Monday afternoon at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team PSS proved they are not just brains but also brawn as they schooled CHCC, 88-49, in the Inaugural R&J Wine and Liquor Inter-Gov't/Business League 2023 Tuesday afternoon at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

It was an equal matchup in the first quarter as the showdown between educators and healthcare providers raged on in the court. Tied at 11-11 by end of the first quarter, none was superior to the other—yet.

Then, PSS showed they had more firepower heading into the second quarter and pulled away with back-to-back shots by Tyler Palacios and a couple of 3-pointers by sharpshooter Preston Basa and Poland Masaharu.

CHCC was stuck at a low-scoring 11-point second quarter with PSS' defensive command and accuracy with their attempts. Basa led the team from the outskirts as he made five baskets from 3-point ter-

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